Hafa Adai!

Palacios has no problem with no BGRT hike. PAGE 2
Kaneshi-Palec named 2023 SBDC State Star recipient. PAGE 3

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Saipan Tribune

$1

FIELD OF HEROES PROCLAMATION SIGNING CHRYSTAL MARINO

Gov. Arnold I. Palacios, Lt. Gov. David M. Apatang, Tan Holdings CEO Jerry Tan, and dozens of first responders from Customs Border Protection, Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services, Department of Public Safety, Transportation Security Administration, and members from the Northern Marianas Humanities Council, the Tan Siu Lin Foundation, and the Office of the Mayor, and Mayor Ramon Blas 'RB' Camacho gathered at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport yesterday morning for a proclamation signing for the eighth consecutive "We Will Never Forget: Field of Heroes" commemoration on the island, which usually takes place on Sept. 11 of each year. ***See story on Page 4.***

Car hits, kills pedestrian

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

A fatal auto-pedestrian crash yesterday morning claimed the life of a man who was attempting to cross Middle Road.

The victim, a 67-year-old of Filipino male whose identity is being temporarily withheld until the next of kin is notified, was pronounced dead upon arrival at the Commonwealth Health Center.

See CAR on Page 4

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The red Toyota RAV4 Adventure involved in the fatal car accident that claimed the life of a 67-year-old man yesterday morning is towed from the scene of the accident.

Jorgensen nomination withdrawn

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Gov. Arnold I. Palacios has withdrawn his nomination of Bruce Jorgensen to serve on the Commonwealth Ports Authority's board on behalf of Rota.

Palacios wrote Senate President Edith Deleon

See JORGENSEN on Page 4

SINCE MARIANA TRENCH MONUMENT WAS CREATED:

'TOUCHBACK' COUNTDOWN
Number of days left until the "touchback" rule takes effect on Sept. 30, 2023:
39

Still no management plan after nearly 15 years—Palacios

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Gov. Arnold I. Palacios has raised with the U.S. Department of the Interior the status of its plans for the

See STILL on Page 4

Marshals now authorized to seize IPI assets

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The U.S Marshals Service is now officially authorized to seize Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC's personal property after the U.S. District Court for the NMI's clerk of court issued the writ of execution previously granted in favor of Joshua Gray.

The clerk of court issued yesterday the writ of execution, authorizing the U.S Marshals Service to seize some IPI property that will be sold to satisfy a court judgment awarded to Gray, IPI's former director of operations who had

See MARSHALS on Page 4

INSIDE

BUSINESS
Pepoy's Restacafe owner Romeo "Bong" Malasarte is introducing the "paluto" concept.
PAGE 11

ASIA
Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida visits the tsunami-wrecked Fukushima nuclear plant.
PAGE 13

LIFE & STYLE
The DC superhero film "Blue Beetle" led weekend ticket sales with a modest $25.4 million opening.
PAGE 15

SCAN ME WITH A COMPATIBLE QR READER TO KEEP UPDATED ON ALL THE LATEST NEWS.

Local

IMPROVED TINIAN MARINA KIMBERLY B. ESMORES

Commonwealth Ports Authority board members, along with the Tinian Municipality and other offivials, cut the ribbon last Friday to unveil the newly improved Tinian Marina, an over $1 million project funded by the Seaport portion of the Divert Lease proceeds.

COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
OFFICIAL SEAL
NHTSA
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY
THIS SUMMER DON'T GET BURNED BY A DUI
DRIVE SOBER OR GET PULLED OVER
August 16 - September 4, 2023
Labor Day National Enforcement Mobilization
The 2023 impaired driving national enforcement mobilization "Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over" goes into effect across the country from August 16 to September 4, 2023.
One of the deadliest and most often committed - yet preventable - of crimes (impaired driving), has become a serious safety epidemic in our country.
Happy LABOR DAY
For more information call CNMI Department of Public Safety
SAIPAN 664-9125/9084/85 | TINIAN 433-9222/2041 | ROTA 532-9433/9350
www.dps.gov.mp

'AS LONG AS IT'S A BALANCED BUDGET'

Palacios has no problem with no BGRT increase

As long as the CNMI government's budget for fiscal year 2024 is balanced, Gov. Arnold I. Palacios has no problem with the Legislature passing a budget legislation that removes his proposal to increase the Business Gross Revenue Tax in order to raise an additional revenue of $9.1 million.

Speaking at a news briefing last week, Palacios said that, if the Legislature decides on another option rather than increasing the BGRT in the second quarter of fiscal year 2024, that's certainly a legislative prerogative.

"I proposed the budget. That was my proposal to come up with a balanced budget to minimize the expenditure cuts," he said.

Last Aug. 10, the House of Representatives passed a bill that proposes a $115.4-million budget for the CNMI government for fiscal year 2024. The legislation does not include the administration's proposal to increase BGRT.

The Senate Fiscal Affairs Committee, chaired by Sen. Donald M. Manglona (Ind-Rota) has yet to file its version of the budget.

Palacios said it would have been easy to propose a budget without a proposal to increase the BGRT, but there would be "a lot of impacts on people's life" such as 64 work hours for government employees rather than 72, and a cut in the insurance coverage for employees.

The governor said the Legislature may come up with a different proposal to cover the $9-million shortfall. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION
Community Development Block Grant - Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) Program

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

OPENING DATE: August 22, 2023 CLOSING DATE: September 06, 2023 TIME: 4:00 P.M.

NMHC JVA NO.	Positions:	Salary:
2023-017	1-CDBG-DR Compliance Specialist-Rota	$25,000.00-$30,000.00- per annum-UNGRADED
2023-018	1- CDBG-DR Loan Specialist- Rota	$25,000.00-$30,000.00- per annum-UNGRADED

Employment application form, detailed job description, qualification requirements and other information may be accessed at www.nmhcgov.net or www.cnmi-cdbgdr.com.

Applicants may submit their applications through the following options: Submission at the at the NMHC Central Office in Garapan, Saipan; or at the NMHC Field Office in Sinapalo, Rota; or email application and documents to officemanager@nmhcgov.net.

All applicants must complete and submit the NMHC Employment Application Form together with required documents that are listed in the Employment Application Package. Failure to provide the required documents will result in automatic disqualification. NMHC and all its properties are drug-free zones; therefore, selected applicant will be subject to pre-employment drug screening.

It is the policy of the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) that the merit system will be applied and administered according to the principle of equal opportunity for all citizens and nationals as defined by its personnel regulations and the Northern Marianas Commonwealth Constitution regardless of age, race, sex, religion, political affiliation or belief, marital status, disability or place of origin.

For inquiries, please contact Mr. Jacob Muna, Office Manager, at (670) 234-6866/9447or by email to officemanager@nmhcgov.net . NMHC is a fair housing agency and an equal opportunity provider, lender and employer.

/s/
JESSE S. PALACIOS
Corporate Director

Kaneshi-Palec named 2023 SBDC State Star recipient

Mercilynn Kaneshi-Palec, associate network director for the CNMI Small Business Development Center at the Northern Marianas College, was recently named a 2023 "State Star" for her outstanding contributions to the local CNMI SBDC Network.

The 2023 State Stars, who were chosen by their SBDC networks, are among the best of the best—those who demonstrate exemplary performance, make significant contributions to their networks, and are deeply committed to the success of America's small businesses.

"I extend my heartfelt congratulations to Mercilynn for being named one of the 2023 SBDC State Star Recipients," CNMI SBDC Network director Nadine Deleon Guerrero said. "Her exceptional dedication and tireless efforts as the associate network director for Northern Marianas College's Small Business Development Center have not only earned her this well-deserved recognition but have also greatly contributed to the success of our local CNMI SBDC Network."

Palec has channeled her entrepreneurial abilities as a private business owner for 10-plus years to become an integral part of CNMI SBDCN's preliminary phase. Her impeccable networking skills and drive have catapulted the program to exceed forecast expectations and create a prominent economic development presence in our community.

Palec's journey with SBDC started in 2017 as a client of the CNMI SBDC service center. While working as the administrator/coordinator of the Saipan Chamber of Commerce, Palec worked closely with then-service center director Nicole Babauta, bringing Small Business Saturday and other important programs to the CNMI. In 2021, Palec joined the SBDC team as the administrative office manager. In 2022, NMC made history by establishing the CNMI SBDC Network. Palec was appointed interim network director, overseeing the opening of the two service centers on Rota and Tinian. In her current capacity as the associate network director, Palec conducts the Lead Center's business advising, client and personnel training, events management, and manages and oversees the day-to-day operations of the CNMI's network.

"I thank the CNMI SBDC Network team for this recognition. I would be remiss not to mention the NMC leadership team who worked tirelessly on the initial grant proposal to bring the Network to the CNMI. At SBDC, we

Kaneshi-Palec

have an incredible team of well-rounded professionals who make all the work we do possible," Palec said.

Palec earned her associate degree in Liberal Arts with an emphasis in education and bachelor's degree with an emphasis in Elementary Education at NMC. She went on to earn her master's degree in Public Administration from the University of Guam. Palec is a local artist under the Department of Community and Culture Affairs, the chairwoman for the NMI Girl Scouts, and a member of the Saipan Chamber of Commerce Education and Workforce Committee. ***(NMC SBDC)***

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
BOARD OF PAROLE
P.O. BOX 502641, Saipan, MP 96950-2641
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E-mail: govbop@pticom.com

TO ALL MEDIA SERVICES PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

MESSAGE: The Honorable Arnold I. Palacios, Governor and the Honorable David Apatang, Lt Governor, through the Board of Parole Office, and pursuant to Public Laq 8-41, Section II of the "Open Government Act of 1992". Here by give Official Notice that a **Parole Board Meeting** is scheduled for **September 01, 2023 (Friday), beginning at 9:00a.m.** at the Honorable Vicente T. Seman Building. Department of Correctional Facility, located at Susupe, Saipan MP 96950. The agenda is as follows:

Board of Parole Meeting Agenda

I. Preliminary Matters
A. Call to order
B. Roll Call
C. Presence of Quorum

II. Consent Items
A. Adoption of Agenda
B. Adoption of Meeting Minutes
a. Parole Hearing Minutes – June 01, 2023
b. Board Meeting Minutes – June 02, 2023

III. New Business
A. Review and discussion of Guam Supervision Transfer Custody - Jose Baza
B. Review and discussion of CPO Renewal

V. Miscellaneous
A. Schedule of next Parole Hearing
B. Schedule of next Executive Meeting

VI. Adjournment

If deemed necessary, members of the Board of Parole may elect to vote to meet in Executive Session to discuss any of the items listed above.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact the Board of Parole Office at telephone numbers 664-3300.

/s/ Lucinda R. Selepeo — 08/08/23
Acting BOP Chairman — Date

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
Bureau of Environmental and Coastal Quality
Division of Coastal Resources Management
P.O. Box 501304, Saipan, MP 96950
Tel: (670) 664-8300; Fax: (670) 664-8315
www.dcrm.gov.mp

Eli D. Cabrera, Administrator — **Richard V. Salas**, Director, DCRM

PUBLIC NOTICE

From the COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS COASTAL MANAGEMENT PROGRAM of the DIVISION OF COASTAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

DATE: August 22, 2023

NOTICE: The Bureau of Environmental and Coastal Quality (BECQ) Division of Coastal Resources Management (DCRM) is currently reviewing the consistency determination submitted by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) for certain proposed marine turtle research activities and is considering whether to exclude those activities from further CNMI consistency review, on a case-by case basis, as environmentally beneficial activities per 15 CFR § 930.33(a)(4), provided that such activities comply with all required permits and authorization requirements pursuant to the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (ESA; 16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.) and any other relevant federal requirements. An environmentally beneficial activity means an activity that protects, preserves, or restores the natural resources of the coastal zone.

The most recent consistency review for the marine turtle research activities under consideration for exclusion can be accessed on the DCRM website at the following link:

https://dcrm.gov.mp/wp-content/uploads/crm/PIFSC-MTBAP_CZMA_Letter_CNMI_2023-2028_Final.pdf

Federal consistency is a provision of the Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA) that requires federal actions that affect any coastal use or resource of the CNMI coastal zone to be consistent to the maximum extent practicable with the enforceable policies of the CNMI's federally approved Coastal Management Program (CMP).
For more information, or to submit comments on whether the project is consistent with the enforceable policies of the CNMI CMP, please contact DCRM at fedcon@dcrm.gov.mp.
This public notice has been published for compliance with CZMA § 306(d)(14). DCRM is soliciting public comments for three (3) days, starting on August 22, 2023 and ending on August 24, 2023. We welcome your feedback and thank you for your consideration.

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
BOARD OF PAROLE
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E-mail: govbop@pticom.com

TO ALL MEDIA SERVICES PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

MESSAGE: The Honorable Arnold I. Palacios, Governor and the Honorable David Apatang, Lt Governor, through the Board of Parole Office, and pursuant to Pubic Law 8-41, Section II of the "Open Government Act of 1992", hereby give Official Notice that a Parole Hearing is scheduled for **August 30 – 31, 2023 (Wednesday-Thursday), beginning at 9:00 a.m.,** at the Honorable Vicente T. Seman Building, Department of Correctional Facility, located at Susupe, Saipan MP 96950. The Agenda is as follows:

		BOP No.:	Criminal Case No.:
I.	**Preliminary Matters**		
	1. Call to order		
	2. Roll Call		
	3. Presence Quorum		
II.	**Consent Items**		
	1. Adoption of Agenda		
III.	**Parole Hearing**		
	1. Kui Zhang	23-006	22-0110
	2. Calistro A. Crisostomo	23-005-RA	19-0080D/ 10-0144/ 12-0027
	3. Bradley Jude Defang	23-001-RA	21-0016D
	4. Titomir Bhuiyan	23-003-RA	14-0126C
	5. Derik C. Reyes	23-007	19-0048/ 21-0015
	6. Randy Anthony Igisomar	23-008	08-0220A/ 14-00016
IV.	**Pardon/ Clemency Hearing**		
	7. Jodan Taitingfong		16-0149D
	8. David D. Kapileo		TR 18-2067
V.	**Revocation Hearing**		
	9. Edward Blas	22-007	22-0175D
VI.	**Adjournment**		

If deemed necessary, members of the Board of Parole may elect to vote to meet in Executive Session to discuss any of the items listed above.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact the Board of Parole Office at telephone numbers 664-3300.

/s/ Lucinda R. Selepeo — 08/08/23
Acting BOP Chairman — Date

MOBILE CLINIC SCHEDULE
AUG 1 17
Adult Health Check
Update on personal medical history, blood pressure check, glucose check, resources & referrals
Nutrition Assistance Program , As Lito from 8:00AM - 11:30AM
DFEMS Station 3, Capitol Hill from 8:00AM - 11:30AM
AUG 3 10
Child Health Check
For children 0-17 years old. Measurements and growth, anticipatory guidance, resources & referrals
Angel Market, Kagman from 1:00PM - 4:30PM
Joeten Kiyu Public Library, Susupe from 1:00PM - 4:30PM
AUG 12 24
Women's Health Check
For women who haven't seen a healthcare provider longer than 1 year, pap smears, breast exams, pre/post partum care, resources & referrals
Guma Sakman, Susupe from 8:00AM - 11:30AM
WIC Clinic, Navy Hill from 8:00AM - 11:30AM
WHAT TO BRING:
INSURANCE CARD (Medicaid and most private insurances accepted)
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August is National Immunization Awareness Month
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'We Will Never Forget: Field of Heroes' commemoration starts

By CHRYSTAL MARINO
chrystal_marino@saipantribune.com
CORRESPONDENT

Gov. Arnold I Palacios, Lt. Gov. David M Apatang, Tan Holdings Corp. CEO Jerry Tan and dozens of first responders gathered at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport yesterday morning to officially kick off the annual commemoration that honors the brave heroes who perished in the 9/11 attacks, sends prayers and support to their families, and recognizes modern-day heroes who continue to work to keep the CNMI and the United States safe,

Joining Palacios and Apatang at the proclamation signing for the eighth consecutive "We Will Never Forget: Field of Heroes" commemoration were dozens of first responders, members from the Customs and Border Protection, Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services, Department of Public Safety, Transportation Security Administration, and members of the Northern Marianas Humanities Council, Tan Siu Lin Foundation, and Office of the Mayor, and Mayor Ramon Blas "RB" Camacho.

The ceremony signaled the start of a commemorative month honoring the legacy of front-line workers, first responders, military personnel, and the community heroes who perished on Sept. 11, 2001, after a terrorist attack destroyed the World Trade Center in New York, taking down with the towers the lives of 2,977 victims, and leaving thousands more injured.

During yesterday's proclamation, it was announced that the Tan Siu Lin Foundation and TanHoldings Corp., which is spearheading this ceremony, will be supplying the American flags that will be put on display at the American Memorial Park on Saipan, Veterans Memorial Park on Tinian, and the CPL. Joe Junior G. Charfauros Veterans Memorial Park on Rota. These flags will be on display for the whole month of September.

The proclamation not only highlighted the legacy of these heroes but also sought to recognize the sacrifices of their families, plus the modern-day heroes in uniform who continue to serve the CNMI and U.S.

"We commend the firefighters, police officers, and first responders who courageously risk their lives to rescue those in need, and commend the ordinary citizens and volunteers who selflessly dedicate their time and talents to recovery efforts. …We honor our military and veterans who continue to serve and defend our nation and freedom against terrorism. We shall remember the lives that were lost, honor the heroic actions…by our firefighters police officers, and first responders and thank the military for their continued service and sacrifice," reads part of the proclamation.

In his remarks, Tan said he also feels gratitude as he watches natural disasters around the globe, like the recent wildfires in Lahaina, Hawaii.

"Our first responders need to be recognized and remembered, not just for what happened 22 years ago. …The work that every responder is doing is really something we should appreciate and recognize every day," he said.

Tan also shared thanked TanHoldings executive Catherine Attao-Toves for the inception and planning of this yearly commemoration.

In his remarks, Palacios said, "We witness courage not in capes, but in the uniforms of our first responders and the selfless acts of everyday citizens, their bravery commitment, and sacrifice serve as a living reminder that America's spirit cannot be broken, even in the most harrowing adversity…We extend our gratitude to the dedicated first responders and military personnel of the CNMI who continually exhibit heroism in the face of natural calamities, crisis and the current global pandemic."

This will be the 22nd commemoration since 9/11, and 21 years since the inception of TSA on Saipan.

CAR

From page 1

For most of yesterday morning, Middle Road was briefly closed by local law enforcement after the man was hit by a car along the pedestrian strip just across Pacific Hardware.

The driver stopped to check on the man despite rumors circulating that the incident was a hit-and-run. A video circulating on social media also appears to show the incident, soon after the car hit the victim.

Yesterday's incident is believed to be the first traffic-related fatality of this year.

Both the Department of Public Safety and the Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services issued separate news releases of the incident.

According to DPS, dispatch received a call at around 5:52am yesterday morning about an auto-pedestrian crash along the northbound lane of Chalan Pale Arnold, Gualo Rai, near Paradise Dental.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Department of Public Safety officers gather at the pedestrian strip across Pacific Hardware to investigate the scene where a man was fatally hit by a car.

At the scene, officers spoke with a 66-year-old female who owns the red Toyota RAV4 Adventure that was reportedly involved in the crash. She told police that she was traveling northbound on Chalan Pale Arnold on the inner lane when she saw a pedestrian walking eastward from the Kid's Playground building toward the Lin's Hardware building.

The driver said that, while traveling northbound on the inner lane, she saw the pedestrian standing in the middle of the road, so she switched to the outer lane and that's when she hit him—while she was switching lanes. The 66-year-old female driver sustained no injuries.

The victim was immediately transported to CHCC but was pronounced dead.

DPS says the case remains under further investigation.

DFEMS stated in its news release that it received the call reporting the auto-pedestrian crash at around 5:50am. At 5:51am, Medic-2 responded to the accident and arrived at the scene at 5:55am.

At the scene, first responders quickly treated the patient as fast as they could so the patient could be transported to the CHC Emergency Room.

"Sadly at 6:18am, the patient did not make it, and Dr. Matthew Nelson said it was due to blunt force trauma. The Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services expresses its sincerest condolences to the family of the pedestrian," said DFEMS.

MARSHALS

From page 1

sued the casino investor for wrongful termination.

The U.S Marshals Service served IPI a copy of the writ, officially kickstarting the seizure of IPI's property. The writ was served to IPI agent Howyo Chi.

Last Wednesday, Chief Judge Ramona Manglona granted Gray's application for writ of execution, authorizing the U.S Marshals to seize IPI's vehicles, liquor, the two crystal dragons that hang over the casino's lobby, computer hardware, furniture and equipment, and casino-related security equipment.

Gray won his discrimination lawsuit against the casino investor and applied for a writ of execution to authorize the seizure of IPI's properties to satisfy the $5,686,182.20 judgment against the casino investor.

According to court documents, after Gray triumphed in his lawsuit against IPI back in May, the court allowed Gray to participate in the limited receivership proceedings last June to satisfy the over $5-million judgment granted in his favor.

However, last July, Gray applied for a writ of execution against IPI's personal property so that they can be sold in an auction to satisfy the judgment awarded him in his suit.

He also requested the court to order IPI to maintain any required registrations and insurance for all of the assets identified, and any other personal property, and maintain these items in good condition.

Gray sued IPI on the grounds of wrongful termination in violation of public policy (immigration violations), wrongful failure to hire, and intentional infliction of emotional distress. He then filed a motion for default judgment in the amount of over $20 million.

Gray, through his lawyer, Bruce Berline, claims that he is entitled to compensatory damages of back pay, front pay, lost future earnings/reputational harm, emotional distress, punitive damages, pre- and post-judgment interest, and attorneys' fees and costs.

Gray requested back pay damages of $464,083.00, front pay damages of $1,475,685.00, and emotional distress damages of $2 million.

In addition, he asked that the court to grant him punitive damages that is seven times the amount of compensatory damages he is asking for, which would have been roughly $27,578,376. The court instead granted him a judgment in the amount of $5,686,182.20.

JORGENSEN

From page 1

Guerrero (D-Saipan) yesterday, expressing his intent to withdraw his nomination of Jorgensen. He did not cite areason for the withdrawal.

"On June 1, 2023, I nominated Mr. Bruce Jorgensen to serve as a member of the board of the Commonwealth Ports Authority to represent the first senatorial district. This appointment requires the advice and consent of the Senate. However, I am officially withdrawing his nomination," he said.

Palacios said he will be submitting a new nomination to represent Rota on the CPA board member.

Back in June, Palacios nominaed Jorgensen to serve the remaining term of former CPA board member Barrie C. Toves, which is set to expire on Oct. 7, 2025.

Shortly after, some members of the Rota community signed a petition opposing the nomination.

Jorgensen previously served on the CPA transition team for the Palacios administration and was tasked with looking into CPA's federal and regulatory compliance. According to him, the CPA is in a "crisis" for multiple reasons, the most worrisome of which is CPA's alleged lack of funding prospects to avert a fiscal downturn.

In addition, Jorgensen also claimed that CPA also faces a crisis due to management issues and alleged prospective sanctions by the Federal Aviation Administration.

STILL

From page 1

Mariana Trench Marine National Monument, which he described as a unique national treasure in CNMI waters.

In his letter Thursday to DOI Secretary Deb Haaland, Palacios said that it's been nearly 15 years since the Mariana Trench National Monument was created, yet there is still no management plan for the monument, there is still no functioning monument advisory council, and only minimal progress in the development of conservation programs and a contact center for public outreach and engagement.

A presidential proclamation established the Marianas Trench Marine National Monument in January 2009.

At that time, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration stated that the monument designation would provide international, national, and local recognition that the Marianas is a refuge for seabirds, sea turtles, unique coral reefs, and a great diversity of seamount and hydrothermal vent life worth preservation.

The monument is cooperatively managed by the Secretary of Commerce (NOAA), the Secretary of the Interior (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service) and the CNMI government, in cooperation with the Department of Defense and the Department of State.

In his letter to Haalandlast week, Palacios asked to be briefed on the status of his nominations to the Monument Advisory Council and the timeline for releasing the monument management plan.

He also asked for a briefing on the progress of planned renovations for the contact station on Saipan and the resources that will be directed to that project.

The governor also requested information on the process to begin discussions to develop a co-management and/or co-stewardship agreement among federal agencies, Commonwealth agencies, and representatives of the indigenous peoples of the Marianas to manage the monument.

Palacios would like to discuss how the CNMI government can work better with the federal partners to improve communications between agencies, and ultimately improve the stewardship of the monument's natural and cultural resources.

Since 2008, when he was then-speaker of the House of Representatives, Palacios was involved in the discussions to establish the marine monument in the Marianas. Palacios later served as a member of the Monument Advisory Council in his capacity as the secretary of Department of Lands and Natural Resources.

Now as governor, Palacios said he continues to have a keen interest in ensuring that the Mariana Trench Marine National Monument fulfills its promise and potential to deliver conservation outcomes for the CNMI's people. He said it should be a model for meaningful co-management and collaborative research, and the focal point for conservation programs that engage and educate the community and visitors about the natural wonders of the Mariana Trench, and the CNMI's deep cultural connections to the sea.

"It should be a jewel in the Pacific," the governor added.

Palacios said he is, however, pleased to see the recent hirings by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife of park superintendent Dr. Sean Macduff and park ranger Jihan Younis, who are "both Marianas natives and dedicated resource managers."

He said Haaland's visit to the CNMI, along with assistant secretary for International and Insular Affairs Carmen Cantor, was a testament to the Biden administration's commitment to building enduring partnerships in the territories and the wider Pacific region.

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JOETEN BACK TO SCHOOL MIDWEEK SPECIAL

TUESDAY & WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 22 & 23, 2023

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IPI receiver's request for reimbursement OK'd

The court-appointed receiver in the receivership granted against Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC has asked the U.S. District Court for the NMI to reimburse it for expenses incurred as a result of the auction of IPI's gaming equipment.

Clear Management, through attorney Michael White, has requested the district court to authorize the disbursement of funds held in an escrow account for expenses incurred from June 10, through July 31, 2023, in the amount of $29,307. The federal court has since granted Clear Management's request.

In his memorandum, White noted that the court's decision on Oct. 26, 2021, stated that the receiver would be entitled to reimbursement of reasonable expenses incurred in connection with the sale of IPI's gaming equipment. The court previously approved Clear Management's expenses in the last four auctions.

The defense did not oppose Clear Management's motion.

Clear Management's limited receivership was established after USA Fanter Corp. sued IPI for breach of contract. The court then issued a final judgment in favor of USA Fanter. Last month, IPI and USA Fanter settled the case. ***(Kimberly B. Esmores)***

An Ogumoro family tradition continues on in the military

The arrival to recruit training is most recruits' first taste of the military. For some, though, it is passed from generation to generation. That's the case of third generation sailor Reianyn Ogumoro Escobar, whose family legacy boasts of over 60 years of collective military service.

Her grandfather, Ambrosio Tagabuel Ogumoro, served over 22 years in the U.S. Marine Corps and retired as a master sergeant. As a trailblazer for the CNMI, some of the highlights of his accomplishments include his selection to serve as the first CNMI Marine Corps chief drill instructor at Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego, Primary Marksmanship chief instructor, and qualified over 40,000 Marines as a weapons chief instructor during his tenure with the 1st Marine Division in Camp Pendleton, California. The drive and dedication to serve our nation continued on with her mother and uncle as well.

Reianyn's mother, Sarilyn Ogumoro Escobar, who serves in the U.S. Navy, has earned her Master's of Science in Nursing and was recently recognized by the Chief of Naval Operations in Washington, D.C. as the first Carolinian from the CNMI to be commissioned as an officer in the Navy. Before her assignment to her current duty station, Sarilyn Ogumoro Escobar was the division officer in charge of the Intensive Care Unit at Balboa Naval Hospital San Diego and was most recently selected to the rank of O-4, lieutenant commander. Sarilyn Ogumoro Escobar is currently stationed in Okinawa, Japan with the 3rd Medical Battalion as the medical officer in charge of the Alert Contingency Marine Air Ground Task Force.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

From left to right, Gunnery Sgt. Ambrose Ogumoro, Jr., Lt. Sarilyn Ogumoro Escobar, Seamen Reianyn Ogumoro Escobar, and MSgt. Ambrosio T. Ogumoro (retired).

Reianyn's uncle, Ambrose Ogumoro Jr., is a gunnery sergeant serving in the U. S. Marine Corps. He is stationed in Camp Lejeune, North Carolina as the II Marine Expeditionary Force Support Battalion supply chief. He has served vital roles in support of II MEF operations in administering the supply and logistical functions for Operation Allied Welcome-Kosovo, Norway Cold Response 22, and Norwegian Response 24, to name a few.

With a rich family history and tradition in the military, Reianyn Ogumoro Escobar's path was destined to cross paths with America's fighting force. She has endured 10 weeks of grueling training and stood above over 900 recruits in which she was meritoriously promoted to her current rank of E-3, Seaman. She enlisted as a hospital corpsman and will continue her training in Fort Sam Houston, Texas.

"It's important we continue to recognize the legacy of the past and present military members of the CNMI as It takes courage to go where no one has gone before, and to do it with the results the Ogumoros have achieved," said Ambrosio Tagabuel Ogumoro. ***(PR)***

DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES
CNMI GOVERNMENT

INVITATION TO BID
ITB NO.: ITB23-OGM/ RT-42300089

SUBMISSION DATE: SEPTEMBER 8, 2023
TIME: 9:30 A.M.

"AS MATMOS PARK CONSTRUCTION PROJECT, ROTA"

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QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS ITB CAN BE MADE TO THE OF OFFICE GRANTS MANAGEMENT & STATE CLEARINGHOUSE BY AUGUST 29, 2023 TO MR. EPIPHANIO E. CABRERA, JR. VIA EMAIL AT epi.cabrera@gov.mp

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ EPIPHANIO E. CABRERA, JR.
ADMINISTRATOR, OGM

/S/ GERALDINE T. CRUZ
ACTING DIRECTOR, PS

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

JVA No. 23-095 (RE-ANNOUNCEMENT)

Opening Date: Thursday, August 17, 2023
Closing Date: Wednesday, August 30, 2023

POSITION TITLE:	Trades Assistant
DEPARTMENT:	Rota Power Generation
LOCATION:	Rota, Northern Marianas Islands, USA
ANNUAL SALARY:	$16,742.00 to $22,602.00 per annum, Non-Exempt
CONTRACT:	Not Contracted
POSITION(S):	One (1)

The incumbent will be under the direct supervision of the Rota Resident Manager or his/her designee. The Trades Assistant assists with the safe and efficient operation of all plant equipment and machinery including, but not limited to, incinerators, generators, operation of valves, plant production operations, and unloading of diesel fuel tank trucks to storage tanks.

Duties:
- Follows all safety and operations procedures during operations and maintenance activities.
- Monitoring Plant systems as assigned.
- Prepares job site for work including gathering and setting up materials and supplies, and setting work safety barriers for protection.
- Gathers, cleans and returns equipment, materials and supplies used.
- Cleans and maintains work site after project or repair work is complete.
- Monitors equipment; takes readings and collects data; documents equipment readings; prepares and submits data and work reports.
- Performs inventory spot checks to ensure adequate materials and supplies are available for daily work activities.
- Assisting with equipment inspections, cleaning, corrosion control, and painting.
- Operating incinerators; oil and water separator pump, servicing and preparing oil filters.
- Maintaining grounds, trimming trees and removing debris and housekeeping.
- Performs other duties of a similar nature and level as assigned. Minimum Requirements:

Education: High School Diploma/GED or ABE Program AS. Training and knowledge in operations repair, and maintenance of power generating and/or industrial equipment/facilities desired but not required.

Knowledge of: Customer service principles; Basic mathematical concepts; Safety procedures and safe work practices; Modern office technology.
Skills in: Operating heavy and light equipment machinery, hand and power tools required of assigned area; Adhering to safety procedures and safe work practices; Prioritizing tasks and managing time for efficiency; Identifying issues and solving problems; Providing attention to detail; Taking equipment readings and recording data; Maintaining activity logs and reports; Utilizing a computer and relevant software applications; Utilizing communication and interpersonal skills as applied to interaction with coworkers, supervisor, the general public, and others to sufficiently exchange or convey information and to receive work direction. Recognize color codes, operate cranes and motor vehicles. Work closely with others and/or alone depending on assigned daily activities.

- **Licensing:**
  - o Valid CNMI Driver's License with appropriate class.
- **Physical Demands and Work Environment:**
  - o Must be able to lift and carry heavy objects up to 45 pounds and over.
  - o Climb ladders, reach above the shoulders, stand, sit, crawl and kneel for prolonged periods and perform repeated bending.
  - o Work inside around machinery in operation; in varying degree of temperature in tight or cramped (confined) work spaces, at heights, on ladders or scaffolds, and on slippery or uneven walking surfaces in close proximity to high and low voltage circuits and climbs stairs frequently.
  - o Work in environments exposed to dust, oil, grease, constant or excessive noise, vibration, and smoke and gas fumes.
  - o Occasionally use solvents, de-greasing agents, or other chemical agents, and be assigned to protracted or irregular hours of work.
  - o Must be available to work a 24/7 rotation shift to include weekends and holidays, may be on call for emergency response.

All applicants may be tested and all applicants are subject to pre-employment drug test.

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Trial set for Senate president's daughter in assault case

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Superior Court has scheduled a bench trial in the assault case against the daughter of Senate president Edith Deleon Guerrero's (D-Saipan), who is accused of assaulting a CNMI assistant attorney general.

Superior Court Associate Judge Wesley Bogdan scheduled last week a bench trial for Nanami Deleon Guerrero Mafnas, who is the daughter of Deleon Guerrero and former Department of Public Safety commissioner Ray Mafnas. The defendant allegedly assaulted Keisha Blaise back in March.

According to the scheduling order, Mafnas' trial is set for Jan. 16, 2024, at 9am.

The scheduling order came after Mafnas, represented by assistant public defender Karie Comstock, chose to proceed to trial instead of pleading guilty.

Mafnas is currently facing charges of assault and battery and disturbing the peace.

According to Saipan Tribune archives, Mafnas faces a maximum imprisonment sentence of one year, a $1,000 fine, or both for the assault charge.

The information filed in court states that Mafnas grabbed the victim by her braided hair, pulled her out of the vehicle, and hit her face and body on or about March 18, 2023, on Saipan.

The charge of disturbing the peace arose from the same incident. The court information states that Mafnas physically assaulted the victim, causing her to feel scared to leave home. Mafnas faces a maximum imprisonment sentence of six months and a $500 fine if found guilty.

The Superior Court issued an arrest warrant for Mafnas last April 6, with bail set at $5,000. Mafnas posted bail last April 7.

CNMI DOL to hold job fair on Sept. 15

The CNMI Department of Labor will be hosting a job fair at the Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan's Hibiscus Hall on Friday, Sept. 15, 2023, from 9am to 3pm.

The highly anticipated in-person event will feature various employers from a wide range of industries from construction, manpower services, retail, hospitality services and more.

The department's theme for this year's fair, "Let's Keep the CNMI Working," is a call to address the imminent "touchback" policy set to go into effect on Sept. 30, 2023. The "touchback" rule is surely going to affect the CNMI's workforce, so the department continually strives to mitigate the impacts of this policy by conducting this job fair. "We seek to provide the means to bolster the CNMI's local workforce and economy at such a crucial moment," said the department in a news release yesterday.

Further information about the job fair can be found at http://www.marianaslabor.net.

The CNMI State Workforce Development Board and the DOL Workforce Investment Agency Division are Equal Opportunity Employers/providers. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.

This event is 100% funded through the U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Title 1 Grant, totaling $1,537,732.00 for program year 2021. ***(PR)***

AG CUP WINNER HONORED CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Youth senator Maili B. Peter, third from right, presents Youth Congress Resolution 19-02 to Jill Anne Mallari, second from right, in a ceremony held on Aug. 9 at Mount Carmel School. The resolution honors Mallari for winning the 37th annual Attorney General's Cup Speech Competition, marking MCS' 20th overall win in the event. Also in photo are, from left, Youth Congress vice speaker Sen. Peaches Fiona Bayot, MCS school counselor Tobed Smith, MCS president Frances T. Taimanao, and Zeno Deleon Guerrero, Jr., rightmost, Mallari's coach and the 2017 AG's Cup Champion.

N. Pacific auditors learn basics of scrutinizing gov't spending

HAGÅTÑA, Guam—The Pacific Association of Supreme Audit Institutions is training entry-level government audit office staff from the north Pacific on the fundamentals of public sector auditing this week.

Twenty-one staff—16 female, five male—from supreme audit institutions in the Federated States of Micronesia and its four states of Chuuk, Kosrae, Pohnpei and Yap; Guam; the Marshall Islands; the Northern Mariana Islands, and Palau are participating in the five-day face-to-face workshop from Aug. 21 to 25.

PASAI program directors Doris Flores Brooks and Susana Laulu are delivering the training with the supervising accountability auditor Vincent Duenas of the Office of Public Accountability in Guam.

Including local senior staff in the facilitation team will build the capacity at the SAI to facilitate in-house training.

The comprehensive training includes modules on the role of SAIs, the public financial management system, key phases of the audit process, auditing standards and stakeholder communication. Participants will also deliver their own presentations during the workshop.

"All public sector auditors need to understand the framework for and elements of public sector auditing," said PASAI chief executive Esther Lameko-Poutoa. "Knowing about the role of SAIs, who the key stakeholders are, the ethical responsibilities, the whole audit process and other information about the public sector enables auditors to carry out their responsibilities effectively and efficiently."

By the end of the workshop, participants should have an increased understanding of what a SAI does, its role in providing external scrutiny of public sector activities and finances, the audit process, auditing standards and the different types of audits.

PASAI acknowledges the support of the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. ***(PR)***

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The Associated Press | Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

Biden again follows in the footsteps of Jimmy Carter

President Joe Biden has professed sympathy for American consumers pinched by inflation. But his actions speak louder than his hollow lip service.

Inflation has stabilized over the past 12 months after skyrocketing to more than 9 percent—a number not seen in four decades. But the White House seems intent on exacerbating the problem.

Last week, Vice President Kamala Harris was in Philadelphia to announce that the Labor Department had revamped a rule governing worker pay on federal construction projects. The reform will relax the standard by which so-called "prevailing wages" are set under the Davis-Bacon Act, which dates to the Great Depression.

The new regulation will raise wages for workers on federal projects and, Harris said, "That's thousands of dollars more every year, to help put a down payment on a home, for example, or to save for retirement, or to simply take their family on vacation once a year."

Not surprisingly, the vice president omitted the fact that this will also drive up the cost of such projects, further burdening taxpayers and putting more inflationary pressures on the economy.

Under current rules imposed during the Reagan administration, prevailing wages are determined by looking at the pay of half the workers in a given trade in a given area. The new Biden rule would reduce that to 30 percent.

In other words, as Eric Boehm of Reason magazine points out, the Biden White House is barring the federal government from "even considering bids that might pay average wages, thereby obligating taxpayers to pay more than they might have had to in an open market."

This is blatant sop to organized labor, which embraces Davis-Bacon as a means of limiting competition. Never mind that the data used to calculate the "prevailing wage" is often scattershot and incomplete or that there's no evidence union labor delivers taxpayers more bang for their buck—quite the contrary. Some of the biggest public sector infrastructure boondoggles—Boston's Big Dig, for instance—were union projects.

Sean Higgins of the Competitive Enterprise Institute told Reason, "The Biden administration's decision to turn back the clock on Davis-Bacon Act regulations to a Carter administration-era version will benefit a few well-connected unions while raising costs on taxpayers." And you can bet that those "well-connected" labor organizations will launder some of their newfound lucre through Biden and his fellow Democrats.

The Congressional Budget Office estimates that Davis-Bacon will cost taxpayers more than $24 billion between 2023 and 2032. The law is a relic and should be abolished. But given the past few years, it's not surprising that the Biden economic team once again follows in the footsteps of the one-term Carter.

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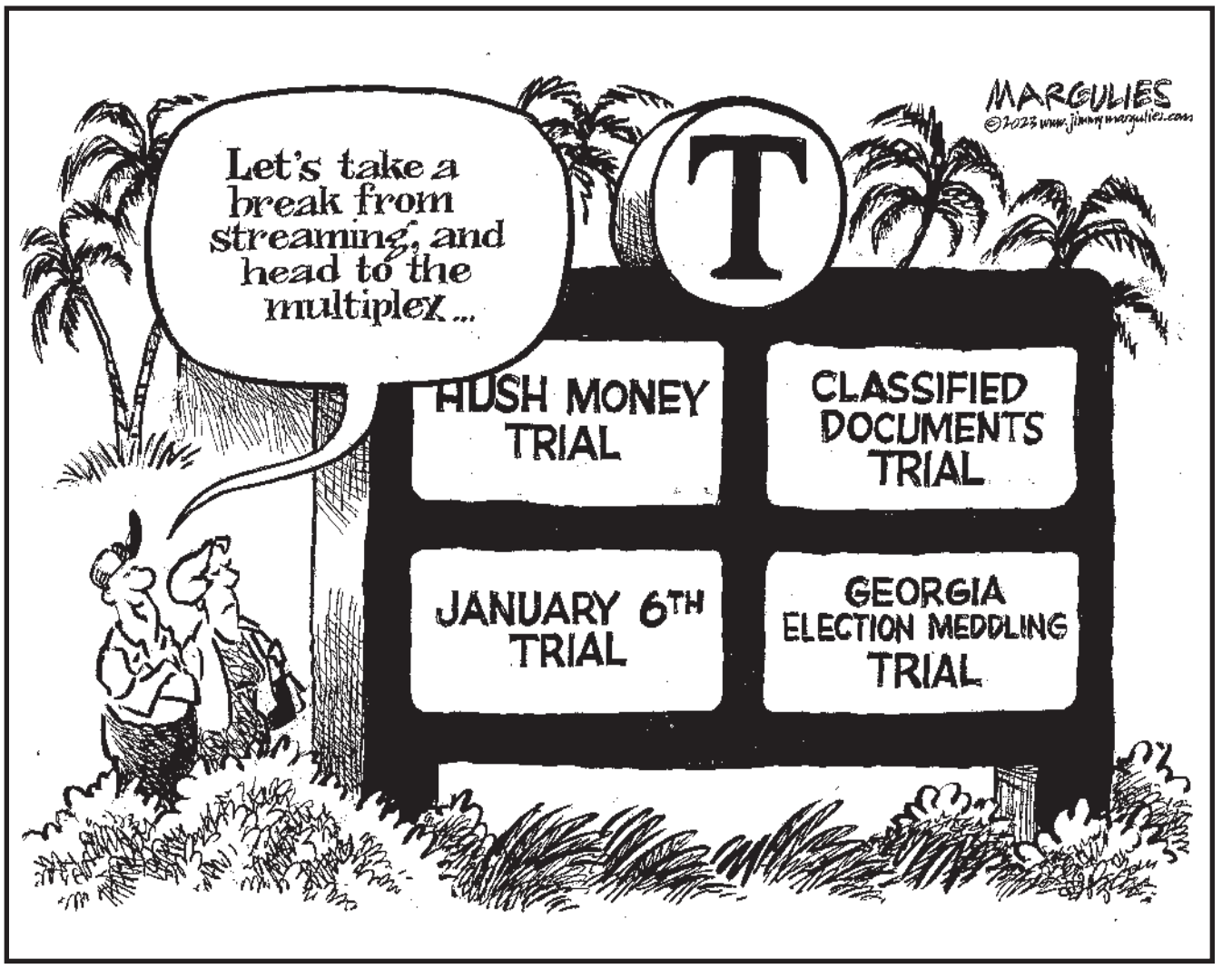

We survived the Paradise fire. For Lahaina survivors, escape from hell will mark them forever

By JAIME O'NEILL
LOS ANGELES TIMES

My wife and I will soon observe the fifth anniversary of the Camp fire that wiped out the town of Paradise in the foothills of Northern California, taking our home and everything we had except for the car we were in and the very few things we gathered as the fire drew nearer.

Five years is long enough that we have almost begun to forget. Until another even more deadly fire wipes another town from the face of the Earth: Lahaina.

It took us nearly 10 hours to make the drive to Sacramento on Nov. 8, 2018, a trip that usually took two. The smoke from the enormous fire behind us followed us; within a few days, Sacramento recorded the worst air quality in the world. Even now, it can seem like we're still traveling that winding road.

It was an anxious drive, with three very unhappy cats in the backseat. We drove through heavily wooded terrain on a road that only recently had been paved. (My wife and some of her friends had been among those who pressured to get that road paved. Had that not happened, more people would surely have been lost.)

The fire was creating its own weather, with sweeping changes in the direction the wind blew. Drought, which would break a few weeks after the damage had been done, had colluded with the wind to make conditions ripe for disaster. Around every bend, we wondered if the road might deliver us to more fire.

Throughout that drive, we held fast to the hope that our home and our belongings would be spared, that we'd return to resume our lives in a few days. We would later learn, of course, that the fire had taken the town, killing 85 residents as it ravaged the Paradise ridge.

We fretted about Callie, the cat we couldn't catch, reassuring ourselves that she'd be waiting for us on the back deck when we returned. My last memory of her still haunts me, seeing her look my way before running off.

We didn't yet know the causes of the fire, but the subject of global warming came up during that long drive. We also knew we weren't the first to be stricken by such an "unnatural" natural disaster, knew that what was befalling us was bound to be repeated with increasing frequency as the years unfolded, the temperatures increased, the world's leaders dithered, and the places to take refuge became ever more scarce.

Just two years later, another town in our neck of the woods would go up in smoke when Greenville, an hour from Paradise, burned to the ground in August 2021.

And now Lahaina, where the death toll is more than 90. As it happened, the conflagration there took place just two days after our eldest daughter arrived on the island to mind a house in Kula and tend the cats for some people who were going to be away. The "up country" Maui fires threatened Kula, on the slope of the Haleakala volcano. As Lahaina burned, our daughter gathered up the two cats she was caring for and headed downhill, to tentative safety in Haiku.

It was touch and go for a few hours, but as I write these words, the cats are OK, the house is OK, our daughter is OK, and fire is no longer an immediate threat to Kula.

The sorrows that accompany wildfire can never be fully tallied, even after the flames are under control. The smoldering rubble is toxic. The dead are not all yet accounted for. Relatives await news with hope and dread. Survivors are trying to anticipate the future, proceeding with inadequate information about insurance claims and the prospects for rebuilding, not at all sure of where to go if they can't rebuild, but they know things will never be the same. What fire survivors need is nearly everything. Much of what they've lost can never be replaced.

We all know there are more such disasters to come, more news of more places obliterated by fires, floods and famine caused by the impact human beings have had on the only home we know. The tragedies are already becoming routine. Back when London was burning during the blitz in World War II, Prime Minister Winston Churchill was quoted as saying, "If you're going through hell, keep going."

For us, the drive out of Paradise was hell, but we kept going, the smoke eventually cleared, life resumed, losses grudgingly accepted, and challenges we had never fully imagined were faced.

Our insurance did what it had been purchased to do, enabling us to put another roof over our heads with a mortgage to go with it. We bought pots and pans, sheets and pillows, and dozens of necessities we had taken for granted for so long. The memory of it all has receded enough for us to begin taking things for granted again, at least until another one hits the news and forces us to relive it.

An escape from disaster will mark you forever more, so you'd do well to tuck Churchill's advice into your go-bag now, against the day the next one threatens you, wherever you are.

Jaime O'Neill is a retired community college teacher and freelance writer who lives in Sacramento.

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Republicans would rather subvert democracy than lose

By FRANCIS WILKINSON
Bloomberg Opinion

Francis Wilkinson is a Bloomberg Opinion *columnist covering U.S. politics and policy. Previously, he was an editor for the* Week*, a writer for* Rolling Stone*, a communications consultant and a political media strategist.*

Political analysts haven't had a difficult time interpreting the string of high-profile defeats that Republicans have experienced on abortion since the Supreme Court jettisoned Roe v Wade last year.

As journalist Ronald Brownstein notes, the Ohio GOP's attempt this month to short-circuit the statewide referendum process—a political bank shot intended to undermine an abortion- rights referendum in November—got clobbered in cities and suburbs. The "escalating political struggle over abortion," Brownstein writes, "is compounding the GOP's challenges in the nation's largest and most economically vibrant metropolitan areas."

Brownstein is referring to the GOP falling behind in areas that power the U.S. economy. Hillary Clinton won counties accounting for about two- thirds of the U.S. gross domestic product in 2016. Four years later, Joe Biden won counties accounting for 70%.

That lopsided result is a window on the two parties' divergent coalitions. The chief reason that the political struggle over abortion is escalating, however, isn't so much the increasing alignment of economically dynamic areas with the Democratic Party, fusing liberalism to economic growth. It's that the Republican Party is hostile to the views of the American majority and steadfastly uninterested in earning its support.

The GOP knows that its myriad efforts to restrict or eliminate abortion rights are unpopular. Poll after poll confirms it, and the party has now lost abortion-related votes in several states, including Kansas and Kentucky— neither of which represents the vanguard of American feminism.

In another stark example, voters in Wisconsin handed a liberal abortion-rights supporter a decisive 11-point victory in the state's supreme court contest earlier this year. The race was widely portrayed as a vote on reproductive rights.

The GOP has responded to its abortion defeats in a systematic fashion. But the system it deploys is not a democratic one. In Ohio, it sought to make it more difficult for voters to decide policies at the polls, putting more power in the hands of GOP legislators. In Wisconsin, Republican legislators are contemplating impeaching the newly-elected Democratic supreme court judge if she doesn't recuse herself in a case over the corrupt gerrymander that enables Republicans to dominate the legislature with half the vote. The cost, delegitimizing elections and disenfranchising voters who put the judge in office by a double-digit margin, is one that Republicans appear willing to impose.

Disenfranchising voters has become a standard GOP resort. Governor Ron DeSantis has shown no qualms about undermining Florida voters, twice removing democratically elected prosecutors on the grounds that he doesn't like their politics. Republicans in Texas, proponents of 10-gallon election lies aimed at disenfranchising 81 million Americans, are determined to manipulate local election oversight. In Alabama, Republican legislators are defying a U.S. Supreme Court ruling requiring they stop disenfranchising Black voters, who have been gerrymandered out of representation by the GOP-dominated legislature.

This is not the way representative democracy is supposed to work. For a look at how a functioning democratic party handles unpopular positions, consider the case of former Democratic Rep. Mondaire Jones.

During Black Lives Matter protests following the 2020 murder of George Floyd by a Minneapolis police officer, the slogan "Defund the Police," a vague assertion with inconsistent meanings, gained currency among BLM activists. The slogan was an act of political self-harm guaranteed to bring aid and comfort to the very forces of police militancy that BLM sought to defang.

Republicans, careful students of the methods of Donald Trump, promptly assigned the slogan to the Democratic Party at large and accused Democrats of wanting to stop policing or prosecuting crime. A CNN fact check described subsequent GOP advertising connecting Democrats to "defund the police" as a "dishonesty-filled barrage."

Yet a few Democrats were reckless enough to go there. One was Jones, who represented a moderate suburban congressional district north of New York City that's now represented by Republican Rep. Mike Lawler. (After redistricting, Jones abandoned his district and ran, and lost, in another district.)

Jones is now running for the Democratic nomination to face Lawler in November 2024. However, Jones, who in office occupied the left side of the House Democratic caucus, has adapted to public opinion. In 2022 , he told the New York Times that "defund the police" is a "terrible slogan." In a more recent interview, he cited " poor choices " of words to explain how he came to be associated with it.

Another Democratic candidate for the same seat, Liz Gereghty, who is Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer's sister, seems inclined to make Jones pay for such poor choices. "He's taken positions that I think are going to cause him problems," Gereghty told CNN.

This is evidence of a self-correcting mechanism in which the people seeking to represent the public absorb the public's views to win support. It is the opposite of insulating your party from public opinion through gerrymandering and other subterfuges to disempower voters.

There is no perfect balance in representative democracy. Too much pandering to public opinion can rob politics of the power of conviction and prevent smart, appropriate, difficult choices from being made. Occasionally, moral stands in contrast to public opinion are courageous and necessary.

But the GOP is not taking moral stands and suffering the consequences of its convictions. It is both unwilling to lose power and unwilling to alter unpopular positions. Instead, it attacks democracy itself.

A journey with two strangers helped me see the heartbreaking stories of American refugees

By RICHARD PARKER
LOS ANGELES TIMES

"I need to get home to see my mother. She's not in good health."

These were the words of Randall, a homeless man I had never met before who walked up to me last summer while I was having coffee in a parking lot in southern New Mexico. It was a Saturday morning and he had two pitbull mixes, which he said were sisters from the same litter. I asked him to sit down in the back seat of my car, handing him water and an extra breakfast sandwich. He was sweating profusely and smelled of a man who had lived on the streets for more than two years, which he had.

Thus began a journey to the California-Nevada border through the night. In this journey I witnessed where people had gone during the massive economic dislocations over the last 20 years. They are scattered across the southwestern desert just off the road, encamped alone or with family and whatever they could throw into their cars, like Ukrainian refugees or Okies who fled the Dust Bowl in the 1930s.

While we tend to think of homelessness as just an urban phenomenon, it most certainly is not. Federal counts suggest the number is rising steadily as housing stocks, including rural ones, dwindle in affordability. Of the approximately 582,000 homeless Americans, an estimated 30% of those accessing services live in rural and suburban areas, generally with less access to support than their urban counterparts.

As we loaded up the dogs, I told Randall I had just three rules: He had to take a shower and there would be no weapons or drugs. He quickly agreed.

Randall and the dogs were good company and fine passengers; all three slept like they had never gotten to before in their lives. A little at a time I learned his story. He was 33 years old, on the run from some other homeless men—not the police, he said. After 11 hours on the road, we topped the hills over the Las Vegas lights. But we still had two hours to go until Death Valley. My passenger slept.

As a young man, my grandfather experienced rural homelessness that eventually took him out West. He grew up in a huge Catholic family in Missouri, and when he turned 16 his mother took him to the train station. There she pressed a little money into his hand and wished him luck. A teenager, he rode the rails for years. Only the outbreak of World War I changed his fortune. Arriving in San Diego, he joined the U.S. Navy and drilled on the hot asphalt deck of the recruit depot. From there, he went to the Atlantic Fleet and as a seaman chased German U-boats. Afterward, he was fortunate enough never to be homeless again.

Like my grandfather, Randall grew up poor. He had landed in southern New Mexico because he was promised a job, but when he arrived the job vanished. His story was common: He drifted from family to friends, in and out of shelters, and then ended up on the street, the most dangerous option.

At 1:30 a.m. I turned off the paved, narrow highway. We were strangers stuck together in the complete darkness of the desert. I made a crack: "This is how slasher films start." Randall laughed heartily. Finally, we found his mother flashing her phone in the night. She and Randall could not have been nicer, thanking me and offering that I stay the night at her home. I said no thanks and drove off.

After dawn, I pulled into a gas station. Before I could even get out of the car, a woman ran toward me clutching a roll of cash, a purse and two tiny shopping bags. Speaking with what turned out to be a Ukrainian accent, she explained that she'd had a fight with her boyfriend. "I left him," she said defiantly. She was headed to Phoenix, right on my way. I explained my policies about weapons and drugs and replied, "Come on."

The Sonoran Desert flew by. Julia wasn't much for small talk. After asking for permission, she chain-smoked and wept. She arrived in Arizona just before the Russian invasion of Crimea in 2014. Like Randall, she was 33 years old. And when I asked where I was taking her, she echoed his words: "I'm going to stay with my mother."

Off state highway 74, we saw them: cars, trucks and campers scattered along the side of the road, like toys strewn by a careless child. The shoulders of the roads are just dirt in much of Arizona and Nevada, with few rest areas. Phoenix and other cities are kicking out entire homeless camps, so people come to the desert.

Some of the vehicles were the nice campers of winter nomads, but mostly they were faded, old cars with every worldly belonging duct taped together on the roof.

When I dropped Julia off, she thanked me and walked away. I thanked her. After all, she and Randall had shared with me the heartbreaking stories of American refugees.

I then found myself on Interstate 10, homeward bound to El Paso. Like my erstwhile travel companions, I was going to see my mother.

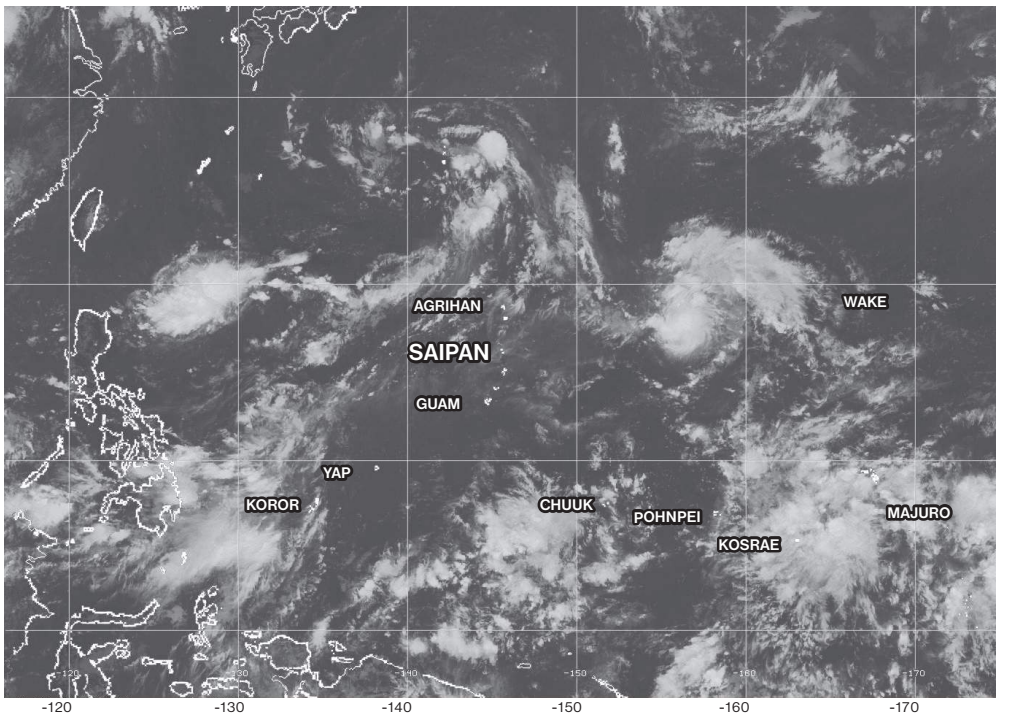
Richard Parker is the author of The Crossing: War, Peace, Love and Death on the Rio Grande, *forthcoming in 2024*.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Isolated showers. Mostly sunny	Mostly sunny	A 30 percent chance of showers. Partly sunny	A chance of showers. Partly sunny	A chance of showers. Partly sunny
87° 76°	86° 78°	86° 78°	86° 78°	86° 78°

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 10:02 AM, MONDAY, AUGUST 21, 2023

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Satellite shows isolated showers moving through the Marianas Waters this morning. The Ipan buoy reveals a 2 foot east swell and a 2 foot south swell, giving combined seas of 3 feet.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: https://www.weather.gov/gum/

MICRONESIA	▲ ▼ °F	
Guam and Rota	Partly Cloudy	85° / 79°
Palau	Thunderstorms	84° / 78°
Yap	Thunderstorms	84° / 80°
Chuuk	Partly Cloudy	86° / 76°
Pohnpei	Thunderstorms	86° / 76°
Kosrae	Partly Cloudy	86° / 76°
Majuro	Thunderstorms	86° / 79°

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:03 AM	6:36 PM
Wednesday	6:03 AM	6:35 PM
Thursday	6:03 AM	6:35 PM
Friday	6:03 AM	6:34 PM
Saturday	6:03 AM	6:33 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	10:23 AM	10:14 PM	-
Wednesday	11:14 AM	10:54 PM	-
Thursday	12:09 PM	11:40 PM	-
Friday	1:08 PM	-	-
Saturday	-	12:32 AM	2:10 PM

AROUND THE GLOBE	▲ ▼ °F	
Auckland	Mostly Cloudy	61° / 54°
Beijing	Partly Cloudy	88° / 72°
Hong Kong	Thunderstorm	88° / 81°
Honolulu	Thunderstorm	87° / 77°
London	Partly Cloudy	72° / 55°
Los Angeles	Partly Cloudy	80° / 65°
Manila	Thunderstorm	88° / 79°
Melbourne	Partly Cloudy	55° / 39°
Miami	Thunderstorm	88° / 80°
New York	Partly Cloudy	92° / 76°
Osaka	Thunderstorm	90° / 79°
Paris	Showers	75° / 57°
Busan	Thunderstorm	82° / 75°
Rome	Sunny	84° / 61°
Salem	Partly Cloudy	89° / 71°
San Francisco	Partly Cloudy	61° / 54°
Seoul	Partly Cloudy	86° / 70°
Tokyo	Thunderstorm	88° / 77°
Washington, DC	Partly Cloudy	93° / 75°

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY	FEET	
5:24 AM	Low Tide	0.67
11:13 AM	High Tide	1.67
5:13 PM	Low Tide	0.88
11:11 PM	High Tide	1.87

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF AUGUST 21, 2023

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA117	9:50AM	10:30AM	Daily
UA156	7:10PM	7:55PM	1, 4

SAIPAN- NARITA (NRT)

UA824	7:25AM	9:55AM	1, 3, 5

GUAM-MANILA (MNL)

PR 111	5:55AM	7:55AM	1, 3, 4, 5, 7
PR 111	6:55AM	8:55AM	2, 6
UA193	6:55PM	10:55PM	2, 5 via Palau
UA183	7:15PM	9:10PM	Daily

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

OZ626/703	4:20AM	10:35PM	Daily
7C3403/2305	4:45AM	10:20PM	Daily
UA117/183	9:50AM	9:10PM	Daily via Guam
UA117/193	9:50AM	10:55PM	2, 5 via Guam, Palau

SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)

TW308	3:15AM	7:00AM	Daily
OZ626	4:20AM	7:55AM	Daily
7C3403	4:45AM	8:35AM	Daily
7C3405	4:10PM	7:45PM	Daily

SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)

7C3451	3:20AM	6:30AM	1, 4, 5, 7

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA174	8:00AM	8:50AM	Daily
UA112	5:15PM	6:05PM	1, 4

NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN

UA825	9:25PM	1:50AM+1	2, 4, 7

MANILA (MNL)-GUAM

UA184	10:25PM	4:25AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7
UA192	10:25PM	6:10AM+1	2, 5 via Palau
PR110	10:30PM	4:25AM+1	2, 3, 5, 6, 7
PR110	11:30PM	5:25AM+1	1, 5
UA184	11:50PM	5:50AM+1	2, 5

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

OZ702/625	12:05PM	2:55AM+1	Daily
UA184/174	10:25PM	8:50AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6,7 via Guam
UA192/174	10:25PM	8:50AM+1	2, 5 via Palau, Guam
7C2306/3406	11:10PM	3:10PM+1	Daily
UA184/174	11:50PM	8:50AM+1	2, 5 via Guam

INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN

7C3406	9:30AM	3:10PM	Daily
TW307	8:30PM	2:15AM+1	Daily
OZ625	9:25PM	2:55AM+1	Daily
7C3404	10:10PM	3:40AM+1	Daily

BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN

7C3452	9:35PM	2:20AM+1	3, 4, 6, 7

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines; PR, Philippine Airlines; TW, T'Way Air; OZ, Asiana Airlines; 7C, Jeju Air; BX, Air Busan • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JUNE 1, 2022

SAIPAN TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1301	8:30	9:00	Daily
1302	11:00	11:30	Mon/Wed/Fri
1302	12:00	12:30	Tues/Thurs/Sat/Sun
1303	15:30	16:00	Daily

ROTA TO GUAM

LIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3401	12:00	12:30	Mon/Wed/Fri

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1202	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	10:00	10:15	Daily
1208	14:00	14:15	Daily
1209	15:00	15:15	Daily
1210	16:00	16:15	Daily
1211	17:00	17:15	Daily

ROTA TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3101	9:30	10:00	Daily
3102	13:00	13:30	Tues/Thurs/Sat/Sun
3102	14:00	14:30	Mon/Wed/Fri
3103	16:30	17:00	Daily

GUAM TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
4301	13:00	13:30	Mon/Wed/Fri

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
2102	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	10:30	10:45	Daily
2108	14:30	14:45	Daily
2109	15:30	15:45	Daily
2110	16:30	16:45	Daily
2111	17:30	17:45	Daily

Business

Pepoy's Restacafe introduces 'paluto' concept

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Pepoy's Restacafe owner Romeo "Bong" Malasarte is combining his passion for fishing with his restaurant business by introducing the "paluto" concept made famous in his home country of the Philippines.

"Paluto" is a term that literally means to have your food—in this case fresh seafood—cooked and under the Chalan Kanoa restaurant's new Friday and Saturday offering, customers can either purchase fresh fish from them or, if they prefer, bring in their own catch.

Malasarte said Pepoy's Restacafe's skilled cooks will then prepare the fish into a culinary masterpiece for a minimum charge.

MARK RABAGO

Hindai, kali kali, mafute, skip jack, and other types of reef fish are among the fish available for "paluto" every Friday and Saturday at Pepoy's Restacafe.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Pepoy's Restacafe owner Romeo "Bong" Malasarte shows off his biggest catch to date—a 68-lb white tuna

The types of fish they typically offer in the "paluto" concept are the ones Malasarte himself usually catches like gindai, kali kali, mafute, skip jack, and other types of reef fish.

And since the Pepoy's Restacafe owner hooks the fish himself, the farm-to-table concept is definitely in full swing.

Malasarte said he got into fishing by accompanying his former Japanese boss in cliff fishing sorties around the island. From there, the side trips turned into a full-fledged hobby as he graduated from a DIY boat to a 25-horsepower speedboat until recently acquiring his dream boat.

Named "The Older I Get," Malasarte's prized possession is an 18-footer powered by a 150-horsepower Yamaha engine with all the customized bells and whistles.

He said fishing gives him "relaxation, improved concentration, and patience from all the ways that modern life affects our brain."

So far, Malasarte said the biggest fish he's caught was a 68-lb white tuna. Also among his favorite catches are a 34-lb amber jack and a 28-lb mahi mahi.

Going back to the "paluto" concept, Pepoy's Restacafe is trying it as they temporarily stopped their Sunday brunch offering.

While the Sunday brunch wasn't sustainable for Pepoy's Restacafe, their karaoke room has been an unqualified success, according to Malasarte, as new equipment like high-end systems and speakers have improved its overall sound quality.

Since opening a couple of years ago, Pepoy's Restacafe has been known for their bulalo special and sizzling dishes. They are open daily from 9am to 10pm. For any questions on the menu, take out, delivery, or catering, call (670) 234-8894 or (670) 488-8899.

Pepoy's Cafe & Restaurant is located in Chalan Kanoa across the intersection leading to the U.S. Post Office.

MARK RABAGO

Pepoy's Restacafe is located in Chalan Kanoa across the intersection leading to the U.S. Post Office.

BUSINESS BRIEFS

American Airlines sues travel site to crack down on consumers who use this trick to save money

DALLAS (AP)—American Airlines is suing a travel website that sells tickets that let people save money by exploiting a quirk in airline pricing. American sued Skiplagged Inc. in federal court in Fort Worth, Texas, this week, accusing the website of deception. It threatened to cancel every ticket that Skiplagged has sold. In a practice called skiplagging and hidden-city ticketing, travelers book a flight that includes at least one stop, but they leave the plane during a layover. Generally skiplagging is not illegal, but airlines claim that it violates their policies. Last month, American booted a 17-year-old from a flight and banned him for three years when he tried to use the tactic to fly from Gainesville, Florida, to Charlotte, North Carolina, on a ticket that listed New York City as his destination. For the teen, that was cheaper than booking a flight directly to Charlotte. In the lawsuit, American accused Skiplagged of tricking consumers into believing they can tap "some kind of secret 'loophole.'" American said the website poses as an ordinary consumer to buy tickets, and warns its customers not to tip off the airline about the arrangement. American said Skiplagged has never been authorized to resell the airline's tickets.

Nissan recalling more than 236,000 cars to fix problem that can cause loss of steering control

DETROIT (AP)—Nissan is recalling more than 236,000 small cars in the U.S. because the tie rods in front suspension can bend and break, possibly causing drivers to lose steering control. The recall covers certain Sentra compact cars from the 2020 through 2022 model years. Tie rods help vehicles move the wheels for steering. Nissan says in documents posted Saturday by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration that if tie rods become bent, they can break and affect the steering, increasing the risk of a crash. Owners should contact dealers if their steering wheel is off center or they feel a vibration. At first, dealers will inspect and replace any bent or broken tie rods. Once a new design is available, they will replace both the left and right tie rods at no cost to owners. Letters notifying owners will be mailed starting Oct. 5.

Cyberattack keeps hospitals' computers offline for weeks

MANCHESTER, Conn. (AP)—Key computer systems at hospitals and clinics in several states have yet to come back online more than two weeks after a cyberattack that forced some emergency room shutdowns and ambulance diversions. Progress is being made "to recover critical systems and restore their integrity," Prospect Medical Holdings said in a Friday statement. But the company, which runs 16 hospitals and dozens of other medical facilities in California, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island and Texas, could not say when operations might return to normal. "We do not yet have a definitive timeline for how long it will be before all of our systems are restored," spokeswoman Nina Kruse said in a text message. "The forensic investigation is still underway and we are working closely with law enforcement officials."

Emerging economies are pushing to end the dollar's dominance

ABUJA, Nigeria (AP)—Business has vanished at Kingsley Odafe's clothing shop in Nigeria's capital, forcing him to lay off three employees.

One culprit for his troubles stands out: The U.S. dollar's strength against the Nigerian currency, the naira, has pushed the price of garments and other foreign goods beyond the reach of local consumers. A bag of imported clothes costs three times what it did two years ago. The price these days is running around 350,000 naira, or $450.

"There are no sales anymore because people have to eat first before thinking of buying clothes," Odafe said.

Across the developing world, many countries are fed up with America's dominance of the global financial system—especially the power of the dollar. They will air their grievances next week as the BRICS bloc of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa meet with other emerging market countries in Johannesburg, South Africa.

But griping about King Dollar is easier than actually deposing the de facto world currency.

The dollar is by far the most-used currency in global business and has shrugged off past challenges to its preeminence.

Despite repeated talk of the BRICS countries rolling out their own currency, no concrete proposals have emerged in the run-up to the summit starting Tuesday. Emerging economies have, however, discussed expanding trade in their own currencies to reduce their reliance on the buck.

At a meeting of BRICS foreign ministers in June, South Africa's Naledi Pandor said the bloc's New Development Bank will seek alternatives "to the current internationally traded currencies"—a euphemism for the dollar. Pandor was sitting alongside Russia's Sergey Lavrov and China's Ma Zhaoxu—representatives of two countries that are especially eager to weaken America's international financial clout.

The BRICS grouping dates to 2009. Originally, it was just BRIC, a term coined by Goldman Sachs economist Jim O'Neill to refer to the rising economies of Brazil, Russia, India and China. South Africa joined in 2010, adding the "S" to the name. More than 20 countries—including Saudi Arabia, Iran and Venezuela—have expressed interest in joining BRICS.

In 2015, the BRICS countries launched the New Development Bank—an alternative to the U.S. and European-dominated International Monetary Fund and World Bank.

"Developing nations are itching to loosen the grip of Western dominance and open the door to a new world order where the East commands equal, if not greater, influence," said Martin Ssempa, a Ugandan political activist who has defended a law Uganda passed this year prescribing the death penalty for some homosexual acts.

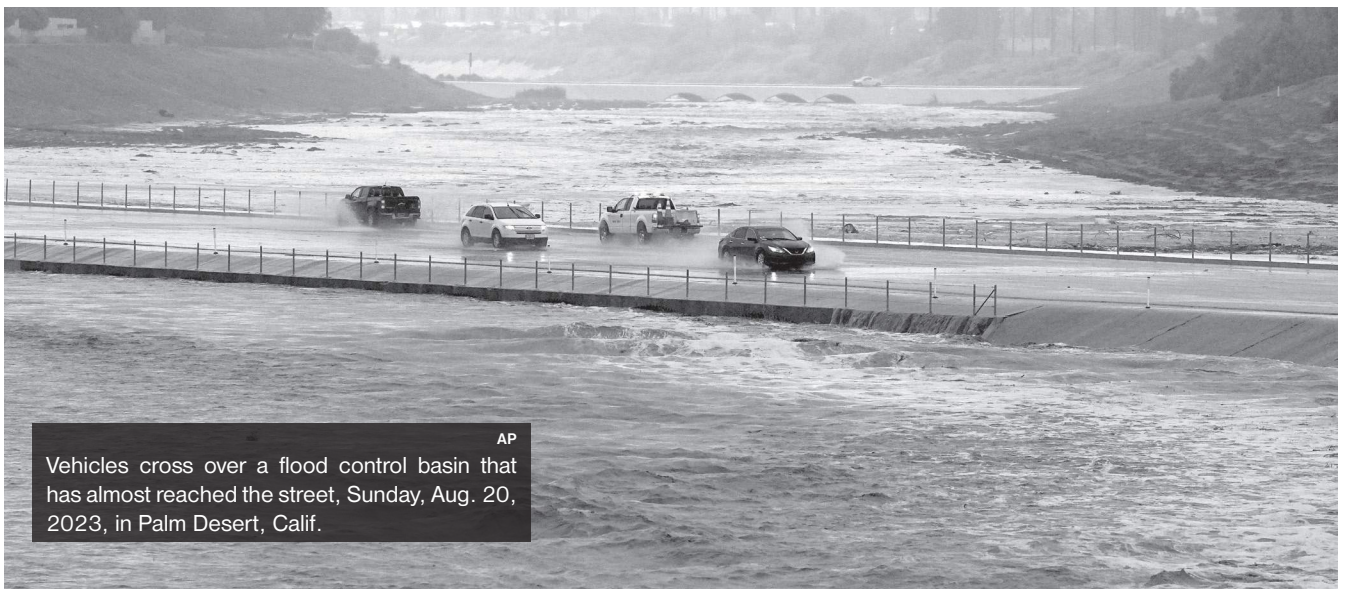
The legislation prompted the World Bank to announce this month that it was halting new lending to the East African country.

Critics in the developing world are especially uneasy about America's willingness to use the dollar's global influence to impose financial sanctions against adversaries—as it did to Russia after the invasion of Ukraine last year.

Nation

Rain from Hilary lashes California and Mexico

» Swamping roads and trapping cars



AP
Vehicles cross over a flood control basin that has almost reached the street, Sunday, Aug. 20, 2023, in Palm Desert, Calif.

SAN DIEGO (AP)—Tropical Storm Hilary inundated streets across Mexico's arid Baja California Peninunsula with deadly floodwaters Sunday before moving over Southern California, where it swamped roads and downed trees, as concerns mounted that flash floods could strike in places as far north as Idaho that rarely get such torrential rain.

Forecasters said Hilary was the first tropical storm to hit Southern California in 84 years, bringing flash floods, mudslides, high winds, power outages and the potential for isolated tornadoes.

Hilary made landfall along the Mexican coast in a sparsely populated area about 150 miles (250 kilometers) south of Ensenada, then moved through mudslide-prone Tijuana, threatening the improvised homes that cling to hillsides just south of the U.S. border.

At least 9 million people were under flash-flood watches and warnings as heavy rain fell across normally sunny Southern California ahead of the brunt of the storm. Desert areas were especially susceptible along with hillsides with wildfire burn scars, forecasters warned.

Mud and boulders spilled onto highways, water overwhelmed drainage systems and tree branches fell in neighborhoods from San Diego to Los Angeles. Dozens of cars were trapped in floodwaters in Palm Springs and surrounding desert communities across the the Coachella Valley. Crews pumped floodwaters out of the emergency room at Eisenhower Medical Center in Rancho Mirage.

The Los Angeles Unified School District, the nation's second largest school system, said all campuses would be closed on Monday.

"There is no way we can compromise the safety of a single child or an employee, and our inability to survey buildings, our inability to determine access to schools makes it nearly impossible for us to open schools," Superintendent Alberto Carvalho said at a media briefing. San Diego schools postponed the first day of classes from Monday to Tuesday.

Southern California got another surprise in the afternoon as an earthquake with a preliminary magnitude of 5.1 hit near Ojai, about 80 miles (130 km) northwest of downtown Los Angeles, according to the U.S. Geological Survey. It was felt widely and was followed by smaller aftershocks. There were no immediate reports of major damage or injury, according to a dispatcher with the Ventura County Sheriff's Office.

Hilary could wallop other Western states with once-in-a-century rains, with a good chance of it becoming the wettest known tropical cyclone to douse Nevada, Oregon and Idaho. Hilary was expected to remain a tropical storm into central Nevada early Monday before dissipating.

By Sunday evening, Hilary had moved over San Diego and was headed north into inland desert areas. Around midday, it had maximum sustained winds of 60 mph (97 kph).

Hurricane Center Director Michael Brennan said that while Hilary had weakened from a Category 4 hurricane, it's the water, not the wind, that people should watch out for most — some areas could get as much rain in hours that they typically get in a year.

"You do not want to be out driving around, trying to cross flooded roads on vehicle or on foot," Brennan said during a briefing from Miami. "Rainfall flooding has been the biggest killer in tropical storms and hurricanes in the United States in the past 10 years, and you don't want to become a statistic."

Hilary is just the latest major climate disaster to wreak havoc across the U.S., Canada and Mexico. Hawaii's island of Maui is still reeling from a blaze that killed over 100 people and ravaged the historic town of Lahaina, making it the deadliest U.S. wildfire in more than a century. Firefighters in Canada are battling that nation's worst fire season on record.

The Mexican cities of Ensenada and Tijuana closed all beaches and opened a half-dozen shelters at sports complexes and government offices.

Trump says he will skip GOP presidential primary debates

NEW YORK (AP)—Former President Donald Trump confirmed Sunday that he will be skipping Wednesday's first Republican presidential primary debate—and others as well.

"The public knows who I am & what a successful Presidency I had," Trump wrote on his social media site. "I WILL THEREFORE NOT BE DOING THE DEBATES!" His spokesman did not immediately clarify whether he plans to boycott every primary debate or just those that have currently been scheduled.

The former president and early GOP frontrunner had said for months that he saw little upside in joining his GOP rivals on stage when they gather for the first time in Milwaukee Wednesday, given his commanding lead in the race. And he had made clear to those he had spoken to in recent days that his opinion had not changed.

"Why would I allow people at 1 or 2% and 0% to be hitting me with questions all night?" he said in an interview in June with Fox News host Bret Baier, who will be serving as a moderator. Trump has also repeatedly criticized Fox, the host of the Aug. 23 primetime event, insisting it is a "hostile network" that he believes will not treat him fairly.

Trump had been discussing a number of debate counterprogramming options, including sitting for an interview with ex-Fox News host Tucker Carlson, who has been hosting a show on the website formerly known as Twitter. Carlson was spotted at Trump's Bedminster, New Jersey, golf club ahead of the announcement, according to a person familiar with the visit who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss it. The New York Times reported Saturday the interview set to air Wednesday has already been taped.

"We cannot confirm or deny —stay tuned," said Trump spokesman Steven Cheung.

The idea had been one of several alternatives Trump had floated in conversations in recent weeks. They included possibly showing up in Milwaukee at the last minute or attending but sitting in the audience and offering live commentary on his Truth Social site. He had also discussed potentially calling into different networks to draw viewers from the debate, or holding a rally instead.

The decision marks another chapter in Trump's ongoing feud with Fox, which was once a staunch defender, but is now perceived to be more favorable to his leading rival, Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis. Fox executives and hosts had lobbied Trump to attend, both privately and on the network's airwaves. But Trump, according to a person close to him, was unswayed, believing executives would not have been wooing him if they weren't concerned about their ratings.

A person familiar had said earlier Sunday that Trump and his team had not notified the Republican National Committee of his plans.

Meanwhile, Trump's rivals had been goading him to appear and preparing in the hopes that he might, concerned that a no-show might make them appear like second-tier candidates and deny them the opportunity to land a knockout blow against the race's Goliath that could change the trajectory of the race.

Former New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie, one of the few candidates willing to directly take on Trump, has been accusing the former president of lacking "the guts to show up" and calling him "a coward" if he doesn't.

A super PAC supporting DeSantis released an ad in which the narrator says: "We can't afford a nominee who is too weak to debate." And in a posting Sunday on X, the social media site formerly known as Twitter, DeSantis campaign spokesman Andrew Romeo said the Florida governor looked forward to sharing his vision Wednesday on what he'll do as president because "no one is entitled to this nomination, including Donald Trump. You have to show up and earn it."

Trump has pushed back on the attacks, telling Newsmax's Eric Bolling that he saw little benefit in participating when he's already leading by a wide margin.

"It's not a question of guts. It's a question of intelligence," he said.

Trump has also said that he will not sign a pledge to support the eventual Republican nominee if he loses the nomination—a requirement set by the Republican National Committee for appearing on stage.

Sweltering temperatures bring misery to large portion of central US

HOUSTON (AP)—Sweltering temperatures lingered Sunday in a large swath of the central U.S., causing misery from the Gulf of Mexico to the Great Lakes.

Record high temperatures were recorded in Texas and other states. People were told to chug extra water while mowing lawns or exercising outdoors, and to check on neighbors to ensure air conditioning is available. The extreme heat prompted Texas' electric power grid manager to ask residents to voluntary conserve power for three hours on Sunday night.

"These high temperatures can impact our friends, families, and neighbors who may live alone, especially if they limit their use of air conditioning," Sarah Russell, commissioner for the St. Louis Emergency Management Agency, said in a statement. "We urge everyone to stop and visit loved ones to ensure they are healthy and well during this extreme heat."

The Dallas-Fort Worth area was expected to reach 110 F (43.3 C) Sunday after hitting 108 F (42.2 C) Saturday, said Sarah Barnes, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service. The record high for those dates was 107 F (41.7 C), set in 2011.

The area is not cooling off enough at night, Barnes said.

"That's really going to contribute to an increased risk of heat-related illnesses," Barnes said Sunday. "That's the main concern when it comes to people and the heat."

The Electric Reliability Council of Texas, or ERCOT, on Sunday asked the state's 30 million residents to voluntarily reduce power use from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. CDT because of "extreme temperatures, continued high demand and unexpected loss of thermal generation."

ERCOT's request for voluntary power conservation was the second such request in the past three days. The agency said it was not in emergency operations. Many residents still view the power grid nervously more than 2.5 years after a deadly winter blackout.

The heat wave causing misery this weekend is just the latest to punish the U.S. this year.

Scientists have long warned that climate change, driven by the burning of fossil fuels, by deforestation and by certain agricultural practices, will lead to more and prolonged bouts of extreme weather, including hotter temperatures.

The entire globe has simmered to record heat both in June and July. And if that's not enough, smoke from wildfires, floods and droughts have caused problems globally.

The National Weather Service set an excessive heat warning Sunday for parts of Texas, Louisiana, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Kansas, Missouri, Illinois, Iowa and Nebraska. Heat advisories or watches were also in place in parts of Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee, Kentucky, Indiana, Wisconsin, Minnesota and South Dakota.

Tourism in New Orleans often slows during the peak of summer heat, and that's happening as temperatures approach 100 F (37.8 C).

Asia

Japan's Kishida visits Fukushima plant

AP

Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, left, along with Tomoaki Kobayakawa, president of Tokyo Electric Power Co. (TEPCO), second right, and Yoshimitsu Kobayashi, chairman of TEPCO, visits a facility to treat radioactive wastewater at the tsunami-wrecked Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant in Okuma town, northeastern Japan, Sunday, Aug. 20, 2023.

TOKYO (AP)—Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida visited the tsunami-wrecked Fukushima nuclear plant Sunday and said an impending release of treated radioactive wastewater into the Pacific Ocean cannot be postponed.

He said the move is safe but his government will do its utmost to support fishing communities from the potential impact of damaging rumors during the decades-long project.

Kishida made his trip hours after returning from a summit with U.S. and South Korean leaders at the American presidential retreat of Camp David. Before leaving Washington on Friday, Kishida said it is time to make a decision on the treated water's release date, which has not been set due to the controversy surrounding the plan.

Kishida on Sunday saw wastewater filtering and dilution facilities and met with the plant and company executives. He told reporters that he confirmed their commitment to safely carrying out the upcoming water discharge. To make room for new facilities needed for the progress of the decommissioning, the treated water needs to be disposed of and tanks removed to make room.

The treated water discharge "by no means can be postponed for the decomissioning and Fukushima's recovery," Kishida said.

He said he hoped to meet with representatives of fisheries organizations on Monday before his ministers decide the start date at a meeting next week. It is widely expected to be the end of August.

Kishida said the water release is a long-term project and that he is aware of the importance of recognizing the concerns and needs of local fishing groups. "I hope to convey the government position directly to the fisheries representatives," he said.

Since the government announced the release plan two years ago, it has faced strong opposition from Japanese fishing organizations, which worry about further damage to the reputation of their seafood as they struggle to recover from the accident. Groups in South Korea and China have also raised concerns, turning it into a political and diplomatic issue.

The government and the plant operator, Tokyo Electric Power Co., or TEPCO, say the water must be removed to make room for the plant's decommissioning and to prevent accidental leaks from the tanks because much of the water is still contaminated and needs further treatment.

Japan has obtained support from the International Atomic Energy Agency to improve transparency and credibility and to ensure the plan by TEPCO meets international safety standards. The government has also stepped up a campaign promoting the plan's safety at home and through diplomatic channels.

The IAEA, in a final report in July, concluded that the TEPCO plan, if conducted strictly as designed, will cause negligible impact on the environment and human health, encouraging Japan to proceed.

US, Japan, Australia plan joint navy drills in disputed S. China Sea, PH official says

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—The United States, Japan and Australia are planning a joint navy drill in the South China Sea off the western Philippines this week to underscore their commitment to the rule of law in the region after a recent show of Chinese aggression in the disputed waters, Filipino security officials said Sunday.

On Aug. 5, Chinese coast guard ships used water cannons against Philippine vessels in the contested waterway where disputes have long been regarded as a potential flashpoint and have become a fault line in the rivalry between the U.S. and China in the region.

The drill will include three aircraft and helicopter carriers sailing together in a show of force and undertaking joint drills. Their commanders are set to meet with Filipino counterparts in Manila after the offshore drills, two Philippine security officials told The Associated Press.

Both spoke on condition of anonymity because they are not allowed to publicly discuss details of the planned drills.

The U.S. plans to deploy an aircraft carrier, the USS America, while Japan would send one of its biggest warships, the helicopter carrier JS Izumo. The Royal Australian Navy would send its HMAS Canberra, which also carries helicopters, one of the two officials said, adding that the joint drill was planned a few months ago.

The Philippines would not be part of this week's drills due to military logistical limitations but is open to becoming a participant in the future, the official said.

The United States, Japan and Australia were among several countries that immediately expressed support for the Philippines and concern over the Chinese action following the tense stand-off earlier this month.

Philippine officials said six Chinese coast guard ships and two militia vessels blocked two Philippine navy-chartered civilian boats taking supplies to the Philippine forces stationed at the Second Thomas Shoal. One supply boat was hit with a powerful water cannon by the Chinese coast guard while the other managed to deliver food, water, fuel and other supplies to the Filipino forces guarding the shoal, the Philippine military said.

World

WORLD BRIEFS

Denmark, Netherlands pledge to give F-16 fighter jets to Ukraine

EINDHOVEN, Netherlands (AP)—The Netherlands and Denmark announced Sunday they will give F-16 warplanes to Ukraine, a long-awaited announcement that Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy called an important motivation for his country's forces, embroiled in a difficult counteroffensive against Russia. The promise of new fighter jets came the day after an unusually brazen Russian missile strike on a Ukrainian theater that killed seven people and wounded almost 150 others in the northern city of Chernihiv. Zelenskyy vowed stern retaliation for the attack, whose victims included a slain 6-year-old girl dead and 15 wounded children. After months of entreaties from Zelenskyy for F-16s to bolster the Ukrainian air force, the U.S. recently gave approval for the Netherlands and Denmark to provide Ukraine the American-made jets. Zelenskyy travelled to both countries Sunday to finalize the delivery deals.

"F-16s will certainly give new energy, confidence, and motivation to fighters and civilians. I'm sure it will deliver new results for Ukraine and the entire Europe," the Ukrainian leader said. Ukraine hopes the jets will give it a combat edge, after launching a counteroffensive against the Kremlin's forces without air cover from Western aircraft, placing its troops at the mercy of Russian aviation and artillery. Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen pledged 19 F-16s to Ukraine and said she hoped the first six could be handed over around New Year. Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte didn't provide a number or timeframe, saying it depends on how soon Ukrainian crews and infrastructure are ready. Zelenskyy said on his Telegram channel that Ukraine would get 42 jets.

Vote count in Ecuador points to likely runoff between ally of ex-president, banana tycoon's son

GUAYAQUIL, Ecuador (AP)—Ecuadorians put aside fears of leaving their homes amid unprecedented violence and voted for a new president Sunday in a special election that was heavily guarded by police and soldiers in part due to the assassination of a presidential candidate this month. No candidate received enough support to be declared winner, with early results pointing to a leftist backed by a fugitive ex-president likely facing a runoff with the son of a banana tycoon. Trailing them was the substitute of Fernando Villavicencio, who was killed Aug. 9 while leaving a campaign rally. Authorities deployed more than 100,000 police and soldiers to protect the vote against more violence. Gen. Fausto Salinas, commander general of the National Police, said one person was arrested for false voting, two for harassment and resisting arrest and more than 20 for unlawfully carrying guns. With more than 75% the votes counted late Sunday, results from the National Electoral Council had leftist Luisa González in the lead with about 33% of support. Former lawmaker Daniel Noboa was second with about 24%. To win outright, a candidate needed 50% of the vote, or to have at least 40% with a 10-point lead over the closest opponent. Christian Zurita was in third place with 16%. His name was not on the ballot, but he substituted for Fernando Villavicencio, whose killing this month laid bare people's fears over unprecedented violence in a country they considered peaceful up until three years ago.

Rights group says Saudi Arabia border guards fired on and killed hundreds of Ethiopian migrants

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP)—Border guards in Saudi Arabia have fired machine guns and launched mortars at Ethiopians trying to cross into the kingdom from Yemen, likely killing hundreds of the unarmed migrants in recent years, Human Rights Watch said in a report released Monday. The rights group cited eyewitness reports of attacks by troops and images that showed dead bodies and burial sites on migrant routes, saying the death toll could even be "possibly thousands."

The United Nations has already questioned Saudi Arabia about its troops opening fire on the migrants in an escalating pattern of attacks along its southern border with war-torn Yemen. Saudi officials did not respond to requests for comment from The Associated Press, but has previously denied its troops killed migrants. Yemen's Houthi rebels, who allegedly make tens of thousands of dollars a week smuggling migrants over the border, also did not respond to requests for comment. Some 750,000 Ethiopians live in Saudi Arabia, with as many as 450,000 likely having entered the kingdom without authorization, according to 2022 statistics from the International Organization for Migration. The two-year civil war in Ethiopia's northern Tigray region displaced tens of thousands of people. Saudi Arabia, struggling with youth unemployment, has been sending thousands back to Ethiopia in concert with Addis Abba. Human Rights Watch said it spoke to 38 Ethiopian migrants and four relatives of people who attempted to cross the border between March 2022 and June 2023 who said they saw Saudi guards shoot at migrants or launch explosives at groups.

Canadian firefighters wage epic battle to save communities after mass evacuations

VANCOUVER, British Columbia (AP)—Firefighters battling wildfires in western Canada received help from reinforcements and milder weather Saturday, after the nation's worst fire season on record destroyed structures, fouled the air with thick smoke and prompted evacuation orders for tens of thousands of residents. Flames were being held at bay 15 kilometers (9 miles) from Yellowknife, the capital of the Northwest Territories, and weary firefighters had a reprieve around Kelowna in British Columbia. But the firefighters were nowhere close to declaring victory, especially with drier and windier weather forecast for the coming days. "We're by no means out of the woods yet," Mike Westwick, wildfire information officer for Yellowknife, told The Associated Press. "We still have a serious situation. It's not safe to return." The fires near Kelowna, about 90 miles (150 kilometers) north of the U.S. border, are among more than 380 blazes across the province, with 150 burning out of control, according to the Canadian Press. Another 236 fires are burning in the Northwest Territories. At a Saturday evening news conference, Shane Thompson, the province's minister of environment and climate change, said the fires near Yellowknife had not grown very much in the past few days thanks to breaks in the weather. "But I want to be clear, a little bit of rain doesn't mean it's safe to come back home," he said. Others warned that incoming hot weather would make the battle more challenging.

Overdrive

Auto review: X-ploring the envelope in the GMC Sierra AT4X

By HENRY PAYNE
The Detroit News

FLINT, Michigan—The GMC Sierra AT4X AEV Edition is the truck brand's summit. X for X-treme.

On a weekend road trip up north, the pickup moved furniture, took the family to the movies and mixed it up off-road with ATVs. Next time, I'll be sure to ford Lake Huron. What makes the AT4X AEV special is the extraordinary performance capabilities that make it a contender in the V8-powered supertruck wars alongside the Ford F-150 Raptor R, Chevy Silverado ZR2 and Ram Rebel.

I love GM's other eight-piston performance vehicles—the Chevy Corvette and Camaro ZL1 — but try renting a race track on the way home for exercise. On my way back from Charlevoix, I took a detour off I-75 for fun at The Mounds ORV Park. I paid my $15 Genesee County Parks & Recreation fee. Aired the 33-inch Goodyear Wrangler All-Terrain tires down to 21 PSI (from 42).

Released the Kraken.

ROOOOWWWRRR! The beast roared as it gulped real estate across The Mounds' sandy trails like a "Dune" movie sandworm. SPLOOOOSSHHHHH! It emerged from a pool of muddy water left by weekend downpours. WHOMP! Its nose plowed into a sea of sandy moguls.

Moguls, of course, are meant for nimble dirt bikes, not 18-foot-long pickups. Happily, the AT4X AEV was armed to the teeth with five Boron steel skid plates that absorbed the brutality of the impact from my overzealous driving. Modulating the throttle, I negotiated the remaining moguls thanks to quick-reacting triple-spool-valve shocks — tools developed by IMSA race shop Multimatic, for goodness sake.

TNS

With front and rear lockers, 460-torque and 11-inches of ground clearance, the 2023 GMC Sierra AT4X AEV Edition likes to be thrown around in the sand.

TNS

The 2023 GMC Sierra AT4X AEV Edition uses sophisticated, Multimatic shocks to negotiate the gnarly terrain at off-road parks like The Mounds.

TNS

The palatial interior of the 2023 GMC Sierra AT4X AEV Edition includes wireless charging, dual digital screens, sunroof and lots of console storage.

NUTS & BOLTS

2023 GMC Sierra AT4X

- **Vehicle type**: Front-engine, four-wheel-drive four-door pickup
- **Price**: $83,595, including $1,895 destination charge ($91,085 AEV as tested)
- **Powerplant**: 6.2-liter V-8
- **Power**: 420 horsepower, 460 pound-feet of torque
- **Transmission**: 10-speed automatic
- **Performance**: 0-60 mph, 6.1 seconds (Motor Trend); towing, 8,900 pounds; 1,420-pound payload
- **Weight**: 5,974 pounds (as tested)
- **Fuel economy**: EPA est. 14 mpg city/17 highway/15 combined

Report card

- **Highs**: Formidable off-road; easy interior ergonomics (once you've climbed a ladder to get in)
- **Lows**: Big footprint in the city; big price tag
- **Overall**: 4 stars

After a half-hour of this nonstop violence, I stood back to admire my beast of burden. For all its ruggedness, it's hardly a spiked, post-Apocalyptic warthog from "Mad Max: Fury Road."

Standing 11.2 inches off the ground in a black-and-blood-red suit—its handsome mug framed by a steel jaw and C-clamp LED running lights—Sierra AT4X AEV commands respect. Like Shaq walking through your dinner party, the truck turned heads all weekend in Charlevoix, a pickup-choked county with no shortage of head-turning rigs.

GMC's partnership with AEV (American Expedition Vehicles) adds serious details to the AT4X's already formidable toolbox, as well as $6,895 to its bottom line. X for X-pensive. They include twin locking differentials, steel bumpers (with optional front winch out front) and a front approach angle of 32.8 inches. But it's the underbelly Boron plates that are truly impressive. They look as if they could survive a cruise missile hit.

None of this weaponry detracts from the GMC's interior luxury. I performed my off-road stunts with my luggage intact — computer bag, suitcase, tennis bag secured behind the front seats. There's more storage in the rear seat backs.

I love a good V-8, and, when I picked up the GMC, my ears were still ringing from the supercharged, 710-horse 5.0-liter Revology Shelby Mustang GT500 V-8 I'd flogged a few days before in Ann Arbor (my apologies to residents for their shattered windows). A throwback to the Dream Cruise glory days, the Mustang retro-mod's engine fills the cabin with unfiltered sound.

TNS

On a trip to drop off furniture at a furniture resale shop, the 2023 GMC Sierra AT4X AEV Edition's 4.6-foot short box was easy to load thanks to the MultiPro tailgate.

AT4X's V-8 has even more displacement (6.2 liters), yet is a velvet hammer by comparison. Reflecting GMC pickups' status as a new breed of 21st century luxury, the V-8 is muffled by layers of sound-deadening that make the cabin a sanctuary over long road trips.

My driveway is a rotating buffet of meaty test vehicles, and my road trip choices were the four-wheel-drive Sierra AT4X or an electric AWD Toyota bZ4X Limited. With furniture moving on my Charlevoix agenda, the pickup got the nod — but it also proved more convenient.

With a family dinner to make up north, the 355-mile range Kraken made the trip in 4.05 hours (including a 10-minute pit stop for gas), while the 228-mile range Toyota would have required 4.5 hours due to an anticipated 55-minute stop at a fast charger (assuming no waits at the Shell charger in West Branch, which has but two ports). Credit the EV as cheaper to fuel over the 250-mile journey at $30 in charging fees versus $73 for the thirsty, 14-mpg pickup.

Encased in the Sierra's inner sanctum, I enjoyed an easy journey despite stormy weather. Rain and wind battered the truck, which stayed the course like a four-wheeled ocean liner. Twin digital screens are state-of-the-art—as are the head-up display and wireless Android Auto that guided my journey.

As a GM product, the GMC also benefits from industry-leading ergonomics. All the controls I needed were at my fingertips on the steering wheel. Volume control and radio station controls? On the back of the wheel at 3 and 6 o'clock. Adaptive Cruise Control buttons? Use the scroll button in the left quadrant. Vehicle information like tire pressures? Scroll-wheel in the right quadrant was at the ready. These ergonomics are shared across other GM brands, and all benefit.

Absent was GM's SuperCruise self-driving feature, which would have made the interstate drive even easier, but Sierra did have GMC's Swiss-Army-knife-like MultiPro tailgate ($1,200 addition).

The gate has six configurations depending on your tailgating needs—and we used its step feature to walk into the tailgate and load the pieces of a bed. The AT4X model is available only in Crew Cab/short box configuration.

As the sun set, we set off for the movies in Petoskey with plenty of room for four. My wee wife and daughter-in-law, it should be said, struggled a bit with the beast's height—kinda' like trying to climb on Shaq's shoulders. The AT4X eschews the running boards of other expensive trucks to maximize off-road ground clearance, and Mrs. Payne practically had to pole-vault into the front seat.

Once inside, the cooled GMC's thrones were cozy on a warm June summer's night. And GM has adopted Mazda-style, single-action vents for easy HVAC.

For all of its off-road macho, the AT4X AEV was a gentle giant to ride on-road thanks to its talented shocks and chassis. In keeping with its Camaro and Corvette performance brethren, GMC and Chevy trucks sport highly-engineered chassis dynamics that allow for spirited driving on country roads.

Assuming you have the permission of the other passengers.

And when you're the only one aboard the Sandworm, well, don't be shy about taking a detour to an off-road park. Maybe I'll explore Silver Lake dunes next time.

Henry Payne is auto critic for The Detroit News. Find him at hpayne@detroitnews.com or Twitter @HenryEPayne.

Life & Style

‘Blue Beetle’ unseats ‘Barbie’ atop box office, ending four-week reign

NEW YORK (AP)—The DC superhero film “Blue Beetle” led weekend ticket sales with a modest $25.4 million opening, according to studio estimates Sunday, dethroning “Barbie” from the top spot after a record-setting run that left movie theaters colored pink for a month.

The “Barbie” phenomenon is far from over. Greta Gerwig’s film, which earlier this week became the highest grossing Warner Bros. release ever domestically, nearly managed to stay No. 1 again with $21.5 million in its fifth weekend. It’s up to $567.3 million in North America and an eye-popping $1.28 billion globally.

The other half of “Barbenheimer” also continues to perform remarkably well for a movie so far into its run.

Christopher Nolan’s “Oppenheimer” took in $10.6 million in its fifth week. With a $285.2 million domestic total, “Oppenheimer” now owns the distinction of being the biggest box-office hit never to land No. 1 at the weekend box office. The previous record-holder for that unlikely stat is 2016’s “Sing,” which grossed $270.3 million in the shadow of “Rogue One: A Star Wars Story” and “Hidden Figures.”

AP

This image released by Warner Bros. Pictures shows Xolo Maridueña in a scene from “Blue Beetle.”

Universal Pictures’ “Oppenheimer” has done even better overseas. Its global gross stands at an estimated $717.8 million through Sunday.

“Blue Beetle,” starring Xolo Maridueña, came in on the lower side of expectations and notched one of the lower debuts for a DC Comics movie. Though earlier planned as a streaming-only release, Warner Bros. elected to put “Blue Beetle,” the first DC movie to star a Latino superhero, into theaters in the late summer, a typically quiet period at the box office.

1. **“Blue Beetle,”** *$25.4 million.*
2. **“Barbie,”** *$21.5 million.*
3. **“Oppenheimer,”** *$10.6 million.*
4. **“Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: Mutant Mayhem,”** *$8.4 million.*
5. **“Strays,”** *$8.3 million.*
6. **“Meg 2: The Trench,”** *$6.7 million.*
7. **“Talk to Me,”** *$3.2 million.*
8. **“Haunted Mansion,”** *$3 million.*
9. **“Mission: Impossible — Dead Reckoning Part One,”** *$2.7 million.*
10. **“The Last Voyage of the Demeter,”** *$2.5 million.*

The production price tag of about $105 million was lower for “Blue Beetle” than the average superhero film. It’s one of the last releases produced under an earlier regime at DC Studios, which James Gunn and Peter Safran took the reins of last year.

The film, directed by Ángel Manuel Soto and written by Gareth Dunnet-Alcocer, drew solid reviews—certainly better than the three previous DC releases this year (“The Flash,” “Black Adam” and “Shazam! Fury of the Gods”). “Blue Beetle” (76% fresh on Rotten Tomatoes) is the rare comic-book film to put a Hispanic cast front and center.

But it also faced some tough luck, and not just in the unexpected staying power of “Barbie” and “Oppenheimer.” Southern California was bracing Sunday for Hurricane Hilary—potentially dampening ticket sales in the region. (Los Angeles was still its top market.) And like recent releases, “Blue Beetle,” which added $18 million internationally, didn’t have its cast available to promote the movie due to the ongoing actors strike.

Lolita the orca dies at Miami Seaquarium after half-century in captivity

MIAMI (AP)—Lolita, an orca whale held captive for more than a half-century, died Friday at the Miami Seaquarium as caregivers prepared to move her from the theme park in the near future.

The Seaquarium posted a statement from the nonprofit group Friends of Toki on social media that Lolita—also known as Tokitae, or Toki—started exhibiting serious signs of discomfort over the past two days. Seaquarium and Friends of Toki medical team members began treating her immediately and aggressively, but the 57-year-old orca died from an apparent renal condition, the statement said.

“Toki was an inspiration to all who had the fortune to hear her story and especially to the Lummi nation that considered her family,” the Friends of Toki statement said. “Those who have had the privilege to spend time with her will forever remember her beautiful spirit.”

Animal rights activists have been fighting for years to have Lolita freed from her tank at the Miami Seaquarium. The park’s relatively new owner, The Dolphin Company, and the nonprofit Friends of Toki announced a plan in March to possibly move her to a natural sea pen in the Pacific Northwest, with the financial backing of Indianapolis Colts owner Jim Irsay.

AP

Trainer Marcia Hinton pets Lolita, a captive orca whale, during a performance at the Miami Seaquarium in Miami, March 9, 1995.

“I am heartbroken that Toki has left us,” Irsay said in a statement. “Her story captured my heart, just as it did millions of others. I was honored to be part of the team working to return her to her indigenous home, and I take solace in knowing that we significantly improved her living conditions this past year. Her spirit and grace have touched so many. Rest in peace, dear Toki.”

The Lummi Nation, a Native American tribe based in Washington state, refers to orcas as “qwe ’lhol mechen,” which means “our relations below the waves.” The tribe has spent years working to secure Lolita’s release and to return to her home waters.

“The Lummi Nation is saddened by the news that our beloved Orca relative has passed away at the estimated age of 57 years old,” Chairman Tony Hillaire said in a statement.

Parent tired of hosting the neighborhood bully

DEAR ABBY: My daughter is the youngest kid in the neighborhood, and a girl up the street treats her horribly. She calls her a baby, tells her she’s not a person and sends her home when everybody plays at her house.

The other kids are friendly with my daughter, and when they come to play at our house, the mean girl comes too. She’s never mean to my daughter when I’m around, but I don’t think it’s right to let her enjoy our pool and games when she won’t let my daughter play at her house.

How do I ask her to leave without seeming like a bully while allowing the other kids to stay and play? The other mother is of no help.

WANTS THE BULLY TO LEAVE

DEAR WANTS THE BULLY TO LEAVE: I assume the other mother is aware that her daughter refuses to allow your daughter to play at her house with the other kids. Because she hasn’t intervened, the ball is in your court. Teach your daughter a lesson in assertiveness. The next time the bully shows up, your DAUGHTER should tell the girl she is not welcome and WHY.

■■■

DEAR ABBY: We made plans on Sunday to get together with a couple the following Friday. We do this regularly. An hour before, I texted to be sure we were still on. I didn’t receive an immediate reply. A half-hour later, I called and was told yes. I replied, “Great! See you soon.”

Five minutes later, she texted me to say they were going out to dinner because friends from out of state had surprised them and “maybe tomorrow we can get together.” We are very disappointed in our close friends who made plans with us but changed their minds. Are we wrong to feel hurt? We could have changed our plans because some out-of-state friends showed up, but we didn’t.

HURT ON THE EAST COAST

DEAR HURT: I understand your feelings, but I hope you won’t nurse a grudge. Your friends made a snap decision on the spur of the moment which, unfortunately, lacked tact. It might have been better if, when these out-of-state friends appeared on their doorstep, the couple had contacted you and asked if they could bring the people along. They dropped the ball. Forgive them—this time.

■■■

DEAR ABBY: What does it mean when our daughter’s mother-in-law refuses to call my husband and me by our first names? In fact, she doesn’t call us anything. I bend over backward to be hospitable and treat her the way we want to be treated.

NAMELESS IN THE EAST

DEAR ABBY

BY ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

DEAR NAMELESS: How DOES she address you? “Mr.” and “Mrs.”? “Hey, you”? “Dear” or “Sweetie”? Have you told her this bothers you? It may mean she doesn’t particularly like either of you and this is her way of distancing. It could also mean that she can’t remember what your names are. You can’t go wrong if you continue treating her as you want to be treated and try harder not to take this so personally.

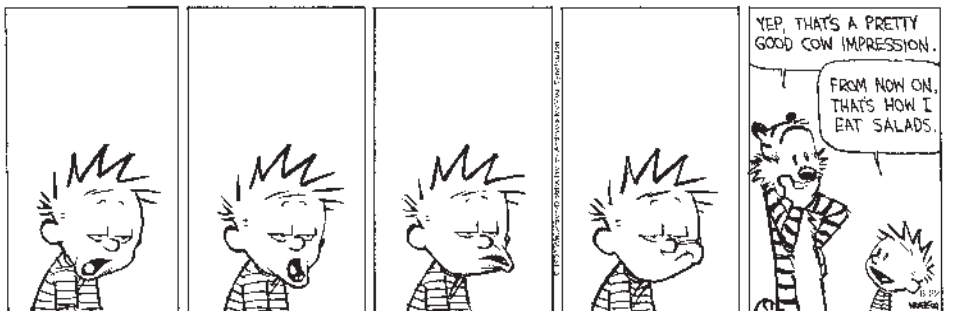
■■■

To receive a collection of Abby’s most memorable—and most frequently requested—poems and essays, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby—Keepers Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson



Garfield®

By Jim Davis

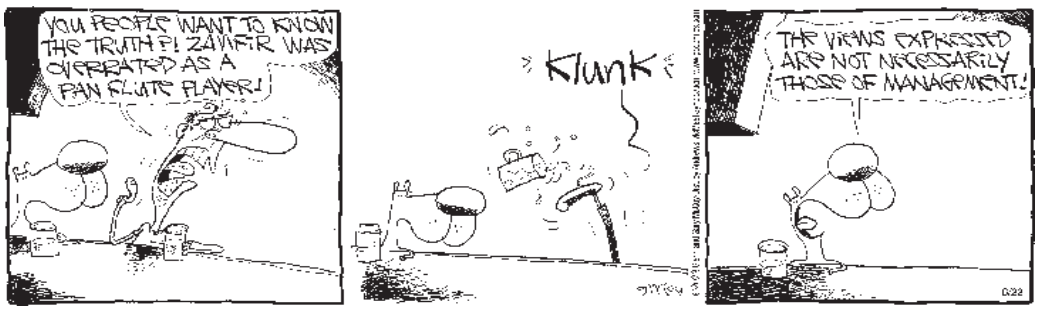
Adam@home

By Bryan Basset

HOW'S THE BOOK COMING?
IT'S NOT. HOW ABOUT YOURS? ZOOMING ALONG AGAIN?
UM... I DON'T WANT TO SAY.
ARE YOUR FINGERS SMOKING?
OH, C'MON. THEY'RE BARELY SMOLDERING.

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy


YOU PEOPLE WANT TO KNOW THE TRUTH?! ZAVIER WAS OVERRATED AS A PAN FLUTE PLAYER!
Klunk
THE VIEWS EXPRESSED ARE NOT NECESSARILY THOSE OF MANAGEMENT!

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Dessert fruit
5 Joke
8 Actress Celeste
12 Juanita's home
13 Buck-eyes' sch.
14 Emmy-winner Falco
15 Traveler's need
17 Morays
18 Bit of ink
19 Gung-ho
21 — Heights (Mideast region)
24 New York Liberty's org.
25 Algerian port
26 Social service concern
30 "Nova" subj.
31 Goofed
32 Avril follower
33 Toned, muscular person
35 Faction
36 Flag creator
37 Young hoodlums
38 Lustrous fabrics
41 Wall St. wheeler-dealer
42 Bark
43 Cat-woman's garment
48 Gray's subj.
49 California fort
50 Coastal eagle
51 Turner and Danson
52 Director Craven
53 Ocean motion

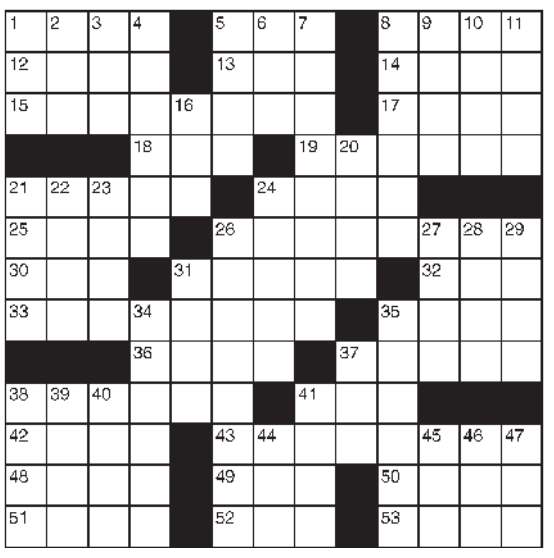
DOWN

1 Mac rivals
2 Vichy water
3 "— was saying ..."
4 Wicker material
5 Capricorn
6 Ninny
7 Dairy cattle type
8 Donkey's comment
9 Baltic Sea feeder
10 Country singer McCann
11 Netting
16 Fire
20 Sleeping
21 "Gee whiz!"
22 Killer whale
23 Hideaway
24 Hospital sections
26 Medieval weapon
27 Warning sign
28 Poolroom prop
29 Young foxes
31 Black, in verse
34 Snow formations
35 Group within a group
37 Snoop
38 Smack a baseball
39 First-rate
40 Frog's kin
41 Tosses in
44 Mine matter
45 Swiss canton
46 Ky. neighbor
47 Golf peg

Solution time: 22 mins.

F	O	N	■	C	S	P	A	N	■	F	A	T
L	A	B	■	A	L	O	N	E	■	R	N	A
F	R	A	C	T	I	O	N	S	■	A	T	I
■	■	■	O	E	D	■	E	T	I	N	I	C
B	Γ	Γ	O	R	Γ	■	Γ	I	Γ	C	■	■
L	T	R	■	S	R	A	■	E	R	I	K	A
U	R	A	L	■	S	P	Y	■	A	S	I	S
R	E	M	I	T	■	E	O	S	■	C	D	S
■	■	E	R	R	S	■	U	T	M	O	S	T
H	A	W	A	I	I	■	N	E	O	■	■	■
O	V	O	■	Γ	R	A	G	R	A	N	C	E
S	I	R	■	L	E	V	E	E	■	O	R	K
T	S	K	■	E	N	E	R	O	■	N	O	G

Yesterday's answer 8-22



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call 1-900-226-5955! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: James Corden, 45; Kristen Wiig, 50; Adewale Akinnuoye-Agbaje, 56; Ty Burrell, 56.

Happy Birthday: Look at every angle and size up what's possible. Use your imagination and skills to reach your goals. Refuse to let emotional situations bring you down. Rise above any controversy you encounter and turn a negative into a positive. Use your intelligence and experience to outmaneuver anyone trying to exploit you. Responsiveness will get you where you want to go this year. Trust and believe in yourself. Your numbers are 4, 15, 21, 29, 32, 40, 44.

ARIES *(March 21-April 19):* Do and give what you can, even if someone tries to guilt you into taking on more. Know your limitations and strengths and apply what's applicable. Sport a trendy look that boosts your confidence and motivates you to make your presence felt. ✪✪✪

TAURUS *(April 20-May 20):* Express your thoughts, expand your mind and make changes to improve your lifestyle. Optimize your skills to suit what's trending. Protect against illness, injury and getting involved with the wrong people. Concentrate on work. ✪✪✪

GEMINI *(May 21-June 20):* Pay attention to what's happening at home and with personal relationships. Listen carefully, respond and watch how others react. Honesty will lead to better choices. Self-awareness and improvement will increase your confidence. ✪✪✪

CANCER *(June 21-July 22):* Let your mind wander, and you'll conjure a way to make your dreams come true. Step outside your comfort zone; an exciting turn of events will help you revamp your long-term plans. Discuss your needs and concerns, and find out where you stand. ✪✪✪✪

LEO *(July 23-Aug. 22):* Avoid anyone who brings you down or takes advantage of you. Taking on too much will make matters worse. Make your priorities personal gain, physical improvement and nurturing meaningful relationships. Be a good listener, and you'll gain perspective regarding personal possibilities. ✪✪

VIRGO *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22):* You've got more going for you than you realize. Don't hesitate to speak your mind and set your plans in motion. Discipline and research will get you where you want to go and bring about lifestyle changes that ease stress. ✪✪✪✪

LIBRA *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22):* Avoid getting trapped in someone else's agenda. Be clear about your position, and you'll shake off any backlash about inconsistency. Actions will send a message that stabilizes your life and encourages you to open new doors. Romance is favored. ✪✪✪

SCORPIO *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21):* You've got plenty of options. Open your eyes, discuss your plans with knowledgeable people and push for changes that make your life easier and connect you to associates who can help you navigate your way forward. Don't jeopardize your health or position. ✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21):* Take charge and finish what you start. Action will set you apart from those who prefer to talk a lot and produce very little. Leave your credit cards at home and avoid emotional spending. Trying to buy love or favors will cost you dearly. ✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19):* Quicken the pace, speak up and aim to make a difference. Your vision is grand, but cutting corners wherever possible will be necessary to maximize your efficiency. Reach out to a friend, relative or associate who can help you reach your objective. ✪✪✪✪

AQUARIUS *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18):* Keep your thoughts to yourself, and you'll bypass getting into an intellectual disagreement. Pay attention to health, nutrition and fitness to avoid criticism and physical setbacks. Put your energy into something creative that soothes your soul, heightens your awareness and brings you joy. ✪✪

PISCES *(Feb. 19-March 20):* Take on whatever comes your way with a determined attitude and a foolproof plan. You can make a difference if you adjust your lifestyle to designate more time where it counts. Let your heart lead the way and your actions speak for you. ✪✪✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are intelligent, generous and changeable. You are talkative and creative.

✪: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ✪✪: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ✪✪✪: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ✪✪✪✪: Aim high; start new projects. ✪✪✪✪✪: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

			7					9
2			6		5	4		
					1		8	
		1	5	3				
3				1	2	9	7	6
		6	8	7				3
8	6		9		7			4
5	4	2	1	6	8			7
9		7			3	8		

Difficulty: ★★ 8/22

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Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer

9	7	6	4	8	1	2	3	5
5	2	8	3	7	9	1	6	4
1	3	4	6	5	2	7	8	9
6	5	7	9	3	8	4	2	1
2	4	3	7	1	5	8	9	6
8	9	1	2	4	6	3	5	7
4	6	5	8	2	7	9	1	3
3	8	9	1	6	4	5	7	2
7	1	2	5	9	3	6	4	8

Difficulty: ★ 8/21

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WONDERWORD

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the **WONDERWORD.**

AMTRAK'S COAST STARLIGHT Solution: 12 letters

P	A	C	I	F	I	C	O	C	E	A	N	K	V	L
E	S	S	A	N	I	L	A	S	G	N	I	N	I	D
A	A	N	S	F	F	I	L	C	A	S	A	O	N	M
K	N	M	O	T	S	E	W	B	K	E	P	O	E	E
S	J	S	A	G	E	A	R	C	R	S	I	C	Y	G
R	O	O	P	P	E	U	A	U	I	T	R	T	A	N
E	S	T	U	O	C	R	T	B	A	A	R	N	R	A
N	E	S	H	R	T	A	O	T	T	U	I	F	D	R
I	N	E	M	A	N	S	S	E	O	A	D	L	S	E
L	E	R	E	C	I	E	R	T	R	L	E	T	C	D
R	G	O	A	U	A	L	Y	T	L	U	A	S	E	A
E	U	F	L	T	A	E	X	P	R	E	S	S	N	C
P	E	N	T	K	M	E	L	A	S	U	I	T	E	S
U	A	L	E	N	N	U	T	R	A	V	E	L	I	A
S	E	L	E	G	N	A	S	O	L	H	C	A	O	C

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Café, Cascade Range, Castle, Cliffs, Coach, Crater Lake, Dining, Eugene, Express, Forest, Journey, Los Angeles, Map, Meal, Nature, Oregon, Pacific Ocean, Peaks, Ride, Rustic, Salem, Salinas, San Jose, San Luis Obispo, Scene, Seats, Seattle, Sleep, Station, Stops, Suite, Superliner, Tour, Tracks, Train, Travel, Tunnel, Urban, Vineyards, West

Yesterday's Answer: Painters

To purchase **THE COLLECTED WONDERWORD, Volumes 56 through 73,** order on line at www.WonderWordBooks.com. (In Canada, call 1-855-232-2387)

Spain earns 1st Women's World Cup title with a 1-0 win over England

SYDNEY (AP)—A champion's medal around her neck, Salma Paralluelo lay on the field for a while and nestled into the golden glitter that had fallen over Spain's Women's World Cup team as it celebrated a 1-0 victory over England.

Already a world champion in the Under-17 and Under-20 levels, Paralluelo took her time soaking up the atmosphere at Stadium Australia on Sunday after helping the Spanish women's team overcome adversity to win its first senior major global title.

Olga Carmona scored in the first half of the final and Spain held on to cap the month-long tournament. Carmona's triumph was tinged with sadness after learning of her father's death. The Spanish soccer federation issued a statement after the match to confirm Carmona's father had died, without giving specific details.

Overcoming the turmoil that had surrounded the team, the victory made Spain the first team to hold the under-17, under-20 and senior women's world titles at the same time. Spain also joined Germany as the only nations to win both the men's and women's titles.

At the final whistle the Spanish players piled on each other in front of their goal. They were still dancing on the field before and after the trophy presentations.

"We've suffered a lot throughout the past 12 months but I think everything has a reason to be. This has made us a stronger team," Carmona said soon after the game. "And it's really incredible. I don't know just why Spain is the world champions, but I think that we deserved it."

AP

Team Spain celebrates after winning the Women's World Cup soccer final against England at Stadium Australia in Sydney, Australia, Sunday, Aug. 20, 2023.

The Lionesses were trying to bring a World Cup back to England for the first time since the men won it in 1966. The wait will go on.

"At first you feel like you failed with not winning," England captain Millie Bright said. "I think in a couple of weeks and it settles, (we) will be really, really proud."

In an open game featuring multiple chances for both teams, Carmona's left-foot strike in the 29th minute—finishing off a fast-breaking counterattack after England's Lucy Bronze lost possession—was the only goal.

Carmona also scored the game-winner in the 89th minute of Spain's 2-1 semifinal victory over Sweden, becoming the first player since Carli Lloyd in 2015 to score in a World Cup semifinal and final.

Spain had a chance to double the lead in the 68th after a VAR review awarded a penalty for Keira Walsh's handball, but Jenni Hermoso's penalty attempt was saved by Mary Earps.

Spain's victory comes despite a near-mutiny by players last year. Fifteen players said they were stepping away from the national team for their mental health while also calling for a more professional environment.

Three of those players — Ona Batlle, Aitana Bonmatí and Mariona Caldentey — reconciled with the federation and were at the World Cup.

The victory was also a bit of redemption for La Roja, which lost 2-1 in the quarterfinals to eventual champion England at the European championship last year.

"I think all of us, we felt that this team had something special," Carmona said. "I believe that we've shown this on the field, we've shown this in the group stage, in the knockout stage. We've been fighting until the end. We never stopped.

"Last year was different, but football gives you second chances. What better chance than in a World Cup final and to be able to call ourselves world champion."

Spain grew over the course of the tournament. After a 4-0 loss to Japan in the group stage, Spain replaced Misa Rodriguez with Cata Coll in goal. La Roja rebounded quickly by trouncing Switzerland 5-1 to kick off the knockout round and built from there.

"When we found out that we had England in the final, we analyzed them and saw how they played," Bonmati said. "We prepared it well, we came out confident of what we were doing, of our game, of our fight, of our dedication."

England had momentum going into the tournament after winning the Euros, but three of the team's best players, captain Leah Williamson, Fran Kirby and Beth Mead, all had knee injuries that kept them off the World Cup squad.

Sarina Wiegman was the first coach to take her teams to back-to-back World Cup title matches. She led the Netherlands to the final in 2019, but fell 2-0 to the United States. She's now 0-2 in the championship match.

One of England's best chances was in the 16th when Lauren Hemp's blast caromed off the crossbar. A minute later, Paralluelo raced toward goal but couldn't get a clean shot and Earps stopped Alba Redondo's attempt in the scramble in front of the net.

England was coming off a 3-1 victory over host Australia in the semifinal. Lauren James, who was the team's top scorer with three goals and three assists, was forced to sit out two matches after being suspended for stomping on Nigeria's Michelle Alozie to open the knockout stage.

While James was available for the final, Wiegman started Ella Toone and used James as a second-half substitute in a double change to spark the attack.

Spain coach Jorge Vilda started 19-year-old Paralluelo, who scored the breakthrough goal for Spain against Sweden, and the game-winner in extra time over the Netherlands in the quarterfinal. Those efforts helped her win the young player of the tournament award. Earps won the Golden Glove for best goalkeeper and Bonmati won the Golden Ball for best player of World Cup.

Vilda had a challenge in working around two-time Ballon d'Or winner Alexia Putellas, who was still working her way back from a torn ACL last year. For the final, Putellas started on the bench.

Putellas went into the game with 15 seconds left in regulation, but there were 13 minutes of stoppage time. After the match Putellas was in tears as her teammates danced in front of the flag-waving fans behind the team's bench.

There were 75,784 fans at the final at Stadium Australia, including tennis great Billie Jean King, increasing the record attendance for the tournament to more than 1.975 million.

England's Lionesses heralded as 'game changers' back home despite loss to Spain

LONDON (AP)—The wait for a World Cup title goes on for England, but the Lionesses were still heralded as game changers back home after their loss to Spain in Sunday's final in Sydney.

King Charles III, Prime Minister Rishi Sunak and a host of other politicians, royals and celebrities were quick to praise the England players on social media despite a 1-0 loss in the Women's World Cup title match.

"Although it's the result none of us wanted, Lionesses you have done yourselves and this nation proud," Prince William, who is the president of England's Football Association, posted on social media. "Your spirit and drive have inspired so many people and paved the way for generations to come."

After winning the European Championship at home last year, England reached the championship match in the women's global tournament for the first time. It was also the first time an England team had reached a World Cup final since the men's team won in 1966.

"You left absolutely nothing out there @Lionesses," Sunak posted on social media. "It wasn't to be, but you've already secured your legacy as game changers. We are all incredibly proud of you."

The European title helped grow the popularity of the women's game in England to unprecedented levels, and thousands of fans—men and women of all ages—gathered at venues around the country to watch the World Cup final at Stadium Australia. Some of the supporters watching the game on a big screen at a venue outside Wembley Stadium were crying after final whistle, but said the Lionesses' performances will only make them more popular.

"They've taken the game forward in this country more than anyone could ever believe," 67-year-old Sue Whyatt said. "This should take women's football throughout the world on to another level altogether."

Loren Mitchell, a 20-year-old soccer player and fan, said watching the England team had been "very inspirational."

"I want to be up there some day," she said.

Still, there were some reminders that the women's game has to continue fighting for equality.

Prince William and Sunak were both criticized for not traveling to Australia for the final, opting to stay at home instead. William's decision was especially noteworthy as the head of the FA, the governing body of English soccer. Queen Letizia of Spain made the trip to attend the final along with her younger daughter Infanta Sofia.

"I would have personally liked him (William) to go there for the girls," Kelly Dodd, a 39-year-old fan who watched the game with her family at a screening at the Olympic Park in east London, told Britain's PA news agency. "If it was the men they probably would have made the effort to go."

England's kit supplier Nike was also widely slammed for not putting a replica of Mary Earps' goalkeeping jersey up for sale alongside those of the outfield players. Earps saved a penalty during the final and was named the best goalkeeper of the tournament, becoming one of England's most popular players in the process.

Charles had urged the Lionesses to "roar to victory" in a social media post before the game, and offered his commiserations after the loss.

"While I know how sore it must be, let none of you feel defeated, for to have reached the final at all is an immense tribute to your skill, determination and team spirit in the finest sporting tradition," the British monarch wrote. "More than that, though, it will serve as an inspiration for generations to come— and, for that, your place in the history books is assured."

Yankees lose 8 in a row for first time in 28 years, fall 6-5 to Red Sox

NEW YORK (AP)—An overturned call at the plate in the eighth inning led to the latest loss in what's become the New York Yankees' worst season in decades.

The Yankees extended a losing streak to eight for the first time in 28 years, allowing Justin Turner's ninth-inning go-ahead double in a 6-5 defeat to the Boston Red Sox on Sunday.

"We got to be unbelievable the rest of the way," manager Aaron Boone said after the Yankees dropped to 60-64 and fell nine games behind Seattle for the AL's last wild card spot.

New York appeared to break a 5-5 tie in the eighth when Isiah Kiner-Falefa scored from first on rookie Anthony Volpe's single. Plate umpire Junior Valentine signaled safe, ruling Kiner-Falefa's left foot got in ahead of Connor Wong's tag, but the call was reversed in a video review, which also upheld the catcher did not block the plate in violation of rules.

"I got the go sign, went in there," Kiner-Falefa said. "I didn't feel like I had a lane. I think the rule is if you're catcher and you've over the foul line it's considered blocking the bag right there. The ball did beat me but I didn't feel like they had enough to overturn it."

Kiner-Falefa took off from first right before Volpe made contact. He raced home after left fielder Rob Refsnyder slipped before making the throw to shortstop Trevor Story.

"From the get-go I thought he was out," said Boston manager Alex Cora, who had been ejected two inning earlier for arguing a called third strike and watched the key play from the clubhouse. "I was wondering why Junior was waiting. He waited, waited to call him safe and I was like what is he doing."

Swept in consecutive series by Atlanta and Boston, the Yankees have lost eight straight for the first time since Aug. 19-26, 1995 when Buck Showalter's final team fell to 53-58 before finishing 26-7 to getting a wild card spot,

New York, in danger of ending its streak of 30 consecutive winning seasons, is 24-39 since June 4 – the day after slugger Aaron Judge tore a ligament in his right big toe at Dodger Stadium.

"Every loss at this point is tough," Volpe said.

Turner had four RBIs for Boston, which is 8-1 against the Yankees this year and has won seven in a row against New York.

"They just got the better of us," Kiner-Falefa said. "I feel like they're swinging the bats well. They have a good game plan pitching. They're just better than us right now."

AP

New York Yankees' Aaron Judge, center, argues a call with home plate umpire Fieldin Culbreth, right, as catcher Reese McGuire watches during the ninth inning of a baseball game Sunday, Aug. 20, 2023, in New York.

With the score 5-5, Pablo Reyes singled off Clay Holmes (4-4) leading off the ninth and stole second, and Alex Verdugo walked. Turner doubled to the right-field warning track on a sinker.

"He's a good hitter," Cora said. "He's a great a leader and I'm glad he's playing for us."

It was Turner's first hit this season that gave the Red Sox a lead in the ninth or later and the 16th of his career. Turner is hitting .372 with runners in scoring position in his first year with Boston following a decade with the Dodgers and is batting .395 against the Yankees.

"That head a real playoff feel, especially in those last three innings the back and forth and the fans were into it," Turner said. "It was good to get that win.

The Red Sox swept a series in the Bronx for the second time in three seasons. Boston won for the eighth time in 11 games and remained three games behind Seattle.

Chris Martin (4-1) allowed two hits in a scoreless eighth, and Kenley Jansen got his 29th save in 32 chances. Greg Allen doubled leading off the ninth and DJ LeMahieu was hit by a pitch, but Jansen struck out Judge and Torres, then retired Ben Rortvedt on a flyout.

"For a decade long, I've seen Mr. Clutch do his thing," said Jansen, Turner's longtime Dodger teammate.

Rafael Devers homered in the first off Clarke Schmidt and scored on Volpe's throwing error, but Kyle Higashioka and Gleyber Torres hit tying homers in the third and sixth off Nick Pivetta. New York has been outscored 17-0 in the first two innings over its past five games.

Turner hit a three-run homer in the seventh off Michael King, one pitch after Devers was walked intentionally. Volpe tied the score in the bottom half with his 17th homer, a three-run drive against John Schreiber. Torres and Volpe reached 50 RBIs; before Sunday, the Yankees were the only big league team without anyone reaching 50.

NATIONALS 4, PHILLIES 3

WILLIAMSPORT, Pa. (AP)—Trevor Williams tossed two-hit ball over six shutout innings and led Washington over Philadelphia in front of hundreds of the best Little League World Series players from around the world.

Jake Cave hit a two-run homer off Kyle Finnegan in the ninth but the Nationals closer recovered to strike out pinch-hitter J.T. Realmuto to end the game and set off a flurry of fireworks in the outfield. Finnegan got his 21st save.

Williams (6-7) struck out four and walked three.

He had some early help against the NL wild-card leaders. Keibert Ruiz ripped a two-RBI double off Phillies starter Zack Wheeler (9-6) and Dominic Smith had a two RBI single for a 4-0 lead in the first.

BREWERS 6, RANGERS 2

ARLINGTON, Texas (AP)—Max Scherzer (12-5) moved into 11th on the career strikeout list just before an erratic stretch when he forced in a pair of runs, and NL Central-leading Milwaukee completed a three-game sweep.

Corey Seager hit his 23rd homer for AL West-leading Texas (72-52), which matched a season high with their fourth consecutive loss.

No. 9 batter Tyrone Taylor had a two-run triple for Milwaukee (68-57). Adrian Houser (5-4) struck out seven and allowed one run over five innings and Devin Williams got his 30th save.

Scherzer got his 3,343rd strikeout when Brice Turang whiffed opening the third inning, the third of four strikeouts for the three-time Cy Young Award winner.

ORIOLES 12, ATHLETICS 1

OAKLAND, Calif. (AP)—Kyle Bradish (8-6) struck out eight in six dominant innings, Jorge Mateo hit an inside-the-park home run and AL-best Baltimore (77-47) moved 30 games over .500 for the first time since ending 2014 at 96-66.

Ryan Mountcastle extended his on-base streak to a career-high 26 games with three hits including his 17th home run to pace the Orioles' 17-hit attack. Gunnar Henderson hit his 21st to go with two doubles and a triple, and Austin Hays added a two-run single as Baltimore won its sixth in eight games

The A's fell to 34-90, the first time that they've been 56 games under .500 since the franchise was in Philadelphia and finished 49-105 in 1946.

JP Sears (2-10) tied his career high by allowing seven runs in four innings.

MARINERS 7, ASTROS 6

HOUSTON (AP)—Eugenio Suárez hit a two-run homer and rookie Dominic Canzone had a career-high four hits as Seattle took a 6-0 lead against Hunter Brown (9-9) and extended its winning streak to six with a series sweep.

Seattle starter Emerson Hancock pitched two scoreless innings before leaving with a right shoulder strain. Dylan Moore set a career high with four hits.

Matt Brash (9-4) pitched 1 1/3 scoreless innings for the win and Gabe Speier struck out two in the ninth for his first big league save.

GIANTS 4, BRAVES 3

ATLANTA (AP)—Pinch-hitter Joc Pederson' walked with the bases loaded against Kirby Yates (7-1) in the ninth inning, forcing in Michael Conforto with the go-ahead run.

Luis Matos and Wilmer Flores homered, and the Giants won for the second time in 14 road games. The Braves had won seven straight home games.

Camilo Doval (5-3) was part of a bullpen effort that pitched 7 1/3 innings.

TIGERS 4, GUARDIANS 1

CLEVELAND (AP)—Miguel Cabrera singled in his final at-bat at Progressive Field, Spencer Torkelson and Kerry Carpenter homered, and Detroit are 7-3 against Cleveland with three games left and won the season series for first time since 2015.

Torkelson hit a two-run homer in the first off Logan Allen (6-6), his 22nd this season. Cleveland has lost 15 of 22.

Eduardo Rodriguez (9-6) allowed one run and struck out six in 6 2/3 innings, and Alex Lange pitched the ninth for his 18th save.

BLUE JAYS 10, REDS 3

CINCINNATI (AP)—Brandon Belt had his second multihomer game this season and Hyun Jin Ryu (2-1) won consecutive starts for the first time since his latest Tommy John surgery, allowing two runs and four hits in five innings.

Kevin Kiermaier and Belt hit two-run homers in the second inning, and Bo Bichette, Belt and George Springer had solo shots in the fourth.

Hunter Greene (2-5), who made his first start since June 17 after a stint on the injured list caused by right hip pain, gave up career highs of nine runs and 10 hits and tied his career high by allowing five home runs.

Bowden Francis gave up one run and two hits over three innings for his first professional save.

TWINS 2, PIRATES 0

MINNEAPOLIS (AP)—Dallas Keuchel (1-1) retired his first 19 batters before Bryan Reynolds doubled off the right-field wall. Signed to a minor league contract in June, the 35-year-old left-hander made his third big league start this season.

Griffin Jax got two strikeouts to end the seventh. Jhoan Duran struck out two in the ninth and earned his 23rd save.

Edouard Julien drove in a pair of runs off Osvaldo Bido (2-4).

CARDINALS 7, METS 3

ST. LOUIS (AP)—Paul Goldschmidt homered with three hits and three RBIs, Richie Palacios hit a two-run single and St. Louis avoided a four-game sweep and stopped a four-game slide.

Dakota Hudson (5-0) won his fourth straight decision, striking out seven in 5 1/3 innings while allowing two runs and and five hits.

Pete Alonso homered for New York, which had won four in a row. Carlos Carrasco (3-7) gave up three runs and nine hits in four innings.

CUBS 4, ROYALS 3

CHICAGO (AP)—Seiya Suzuki and Miguel Amaya hit solo homers and Kyle Hendricks (5-6) won for the first time since July 25, allowing one run and five hits in 6 1/3 innings.

Jordan Lyles (3-14) pitched a five-hit complete game but became the major leagues' first 14-game loser as Kansas City fell for the fourth time in five games and dropped to 40-86, better only than Oakland among the 30 major league teams.

Adbert Alzolay got his 18th save after allowing pinch-hitter Maikel Garcia's run-scoring single and Matt Beaty's RBI groundout.

WHITE SOX 10, ROCKIES 5

DENVER (AP)—Lenyn Sosa capped Chicago's seven-run eighth inning with a three-run homer against Justin Lawrence and Chicago avoided a sweep and improved to 6-11 in August. Andrew Vaughn had three hits, including his 16th homer.

After Dylan Cease struggled, Bryan Shaw, Aaron Bummer (4-2) and Gregory Santos combined for 4 1/3 innings of one-hit relief.

Charlie Blackmon homered and tripled for Colorado. Matt Koch (2-1) was the loser.

AK hosts 3rd Annual BMW Golf Cup in Guam

TAMUNING, Guam—Atkins Kroll Inc., an Inchcape company, and the authorized importer and distributor of BMW vehicles on Guam, hosted the 3rd Annual BMW Golf Cup last May 21 at the Onward Mangilao Golf Club.

Jade Jung (71.0) and Andy Lin (68.8) were awarded the grand prizes for the Women's and Men's divisions, respectively.

"AK congratulates the winners of the third annual BMW Golf Cup. This exclusive, invite-only sporting event allows our team to meaningfully engage with our BMW customers through an enjoyable yet competitive round of golf," said Alex Yap, president of Atkins Kroll. "In addition to having four opportunities to win a BMW X1 or X3 with a hole-in-one, we included an exclusive unveiling of the first-ever to Guam BMW i7, BMW's all-electric luxury sedan that is brimming with futuristic technological and entertainment features."

ATKINS KROLL

Jade Jung and Andy Lin respectively topped the women's and men's divisions of the 3rd Annual BMW Golf Cup held last May 21 at the Onward Mangilao Golf Club. Photo shows all participants pose with a BMW i7, the island's first all-electric luxury sedan.

The Guam BMW Golf Cup is a single Callaway tournament format for men and women. The Onward Mangilao Golf Club's breathtaking coastal views, pristine fairways, and perfectly-manicured greens were the perfect backdrop to the course-wide festivities.

Golfers had four chances during the tournament to win a BMW vehicle. Four of the club's signature holes, including Onward Mangilao Golf Club's world-famous signature hole No. 12, were used for hole-in-one competitions to win 2023 X1 or 2023 X3 vehicles compliments of returning sponsors ASC Trust Corp., Bank of Hawaii, Calvo's Insurance, and First Hawaiian Bank.

AK BMW congratulates the following winners of the 2023 BMW Golf Cup Jung and Lin for topping the women's and men's divisions, respectively.

Coming second to Jung was Michelle Bordallo with her 72.2, while Jinhee Cho 72.4 was good for third place.

Eunha Yoon topped the low gross division with her 79.

Among the men, Guam veteran putter Louie Sunga finished second to Lin with his net 70, while Jong In Cheong was close by with his 70.2 net.

Sunga also ruled the low gross race with his 70.

AK and BMW thank the event's supporters for their role in making the 2023 tournament a success: complimentary Evan Williams Bourbon and beverage stations throughout the course courtesy of Ambros, Inc.; the players' brunch powered by Shell Guam; the longest drive prize provided by Takagi and Associates; and the grand prize of two business class roundtrip tickets from Guam to an Asia destination sponsored by AK Guam. ***(PR)***

TOROS

From page 20

close the gap as they scored just one at their turn.

The Toros scored one more in the next inning and the Little Cubs came roaring in the fourth inning when they scored four runs to tie up the game, 9-9.

However, the Toros weren't giving up yet as they scored two more crucial runs in the fifth inning through Aiden Reyes and D.J. Camacho. It was sufficient as the Little Cubs could not get a rally started in their last chance at the plate and were eliminated from the tourney with their loss.

In the second game, the Blue Jays pummeled the Twins, 17-11.

It was a perfect game for Blue Jays leadoff batter Kody Maratita as he reached base all four times and scored each time. The Blue Jays were just soaring through the game, but turned things around when they scored seven runs in the third inning that went unanswered.

The Twins had scored just three by the third inning and were down by six runs, 3-9, and the Blue Jays added to their collection of runs when they scored two more in the fourth inning.

The Blue Jays' Kody Maratita, Napu Reyes, Guns Sasamoto, Treat Kaipat, Solly Maratita, and Eziekel Camacho sealed the deal for them as they added six more runs to their lead for a 17-5 game.

The Twins ended up scoring just four more runs in the fifth and in their last at-bat in the sixth, scored just two to hand the win to the Blue Jays.

In the semifinals next Saturday, Aug. 26, the Toros will play against the No. 2 seed Comets, while the Blue Jays will take on the No. 1 seed Braves.

KAMIKAZE'S

From page 20

ace on the same hole.

"I actually made a hole in one from 178 yards. That's definitely the highlight of the day and also that's my second one on that hole dating back from March 27, 2020," he told *Saipan Tribune*.

Needless to say, the first round of beers back in the clubhouse after 18 holes of golf was on Camacho, who added that his second round surge in the qualifier more than made up for the stinker he had on Round 1.

"There's no excuses for my score on the first round, but I was actually suffering from tendonitis on my entire right arm days before the tryouts, but it's all good. I'm kind of healthy right now which is good because there's still a lot of work that needs polishing before the next three rounds," he said.

Camacho dedicated his win to his daughter, who's turning 2 yrs old on Aug. 27; as well 6-month-old granddaughter.

A total of 14 showed up for the second qualifier. The rest of the field, with their scores in parenthesis, were as follows: Zhi Yun Li (81), Father James Balajadia (84), Joe Sasamoto (84), Marco Peter (84), Carl Hocog (85), Jay Muna (87), Joshua Atalig (89), Darion Jones (94), Louie Tilipao (95), and Tony Satur (98).

In the women's division, Northern Marianas Pacific Games 2022 gold medalist Zhi Min Jin was the lone participant and carded an 82.

The Refaluwash Golf Association, which is organizing the qualifiers on behalf of the Commonwealth Federation of Golf Associations, thanked LaoLao Bay Golf & Resort for hosting them once again last weekend.

"On behalf of the RGA officers and members we would like to recognize and thank LaoLao Bay Golf & Resort for hosting the 2023 Pacific Games men's and women's golf team tryouts on both the east and west course. With the help and support of LaoLao Bay Golf & Resort, the players were able to use the premier course and short game facilities to further enhance their training and preparation for the Pacific Games set later this year in the Solomon Islands," the club said.

The next Pacific Games golf qualifier will be on Sept. 9 at the east course of the LaoLao Bay Golf & Resort with an 8am showtime and a 9:13am tee time.

For more information, call Pacific Games national team qualifiers coordinator Kaegel Taitano at (670) 789-2102.

SGA monthly tourney on Sunday

The Saipan Golfers Association July Ace of the Month Tournament will be held on Aug. 27, 9:30am at the LaoLao Bay Golf & Resort east course. Show time is 9am.

The monthly tournament was originally set last Aug. 13, but was canceled due to bad weather.

In the June tourney, Tony S. Reyes won his very first SGA monthly competition after topping the tournament last June 18 at the Coral Ocean Resort in Agingan.

The 65-year-old owner of TSR Computer & Consulting Services fired a net score of 69 after shooting a gross score of 89. The 20-handicapper had a 45 in the front nine and a 44 in the back nine.

With his victory in June, Reyes now joins SGA's 2023 Ace of the Year qualifiers Ray Salas (January), Das Krishnan (February), Joe Sablan (March), Rick Kautz (April), and Nick Sablan (May). ***(Mark Rabago)***

NBA launches probe after Harden calls 76ers president Morey a liar

The NBA is investigating the reasons behind James Harden calling Philadelphia 76ers president Daryl Morey a liar, a person with knowledge of the details said Saturday.

The league likely would seek to determine whether any promises were made to Harden that would have been in violation of salary cap rules.

Penalties could be possible, the person told The Associated Press. The person spoke on condition of anonymity because the investigation has not been publicly announced.

It was first reported by ESPN.

Harden picked up his $35.6 million contract option for next season in June, apparently with the hopes that the organization would then trade him. However, the 76ers have not found a deal they like for the 2018 NBA MVP who led the league in assists last season.

The frustrated Harden then made his comments about Morey—who he also played under during his best seasons in Houston—at a promotional event in China.

"Daryl Morey is a liar and I will never be a part of an organization that he's a part of," Harden said at the event. "Let me say that again: Daryl Morey is a liar and I will never be a part of an organization that he's a part of." ***(AP)***

AP

Philadelphia 76ers' James Harden reacts during Game 2 of an NBA basketball first-round playoff series, Monday, April 18, 2022, in Philadelphia.

DAT'S

From page 20

The Blue Jays' offense struck gold against No Choice pitcher Jeff Isaac as in the first inning, they scored six runs. Austin Piteg hit a two-run home run while Kyle Foreman and Adam Salalila got on base and scored on No Choice fielding errors.

No Choice was still silent through the fifth inning when they finally scored four runs off two home runs.

At this point though, the Blue Jays have already scored 12 of their runs and that was enough as No Choice were only able to add four more runs for a 12-8 final.

No Excuse 17, TuTuRamZ 6

No Excuse is still perfect in the season as they defeated TuTuRamZ, 17-6.

No Excuse are always on top of their game as they scored six in the first inning. In TuTuRamZ's at bat, they scored one in the first, then two in the second from a two-run home run by Henry Reyes.

Three more runs came for No Excuse in their next at-bat however as Franko Nakamura hit a three-run home run to make it a 9-3 game.

Only three runs were made by TuTuRamZ in the next innings and No Excuse added eight more for a 17-6 final.

Results of the other games will be posted in the next issues of *Saipan Tribune.*

Spain earns 1st Women's World Cup title with a 1-0 win over England.

PAGE 17

Saipan Tribune
Sports

AK hosts 3rd Annual BMW Golf Cup in Guam.

PAGE 19

Toros, Blue Jays advance to semis

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

The Toros and Blue Jays advanced to the semifinals as they defeated their foes in the last elimination game of the Saipan Baseball League U12 Baseball Tournament last Saturday at the Miguel "Tan Ge" Pangelinan softball field in Susupe.

The skies finally cleared up long enough for the sun to shine down on the little ball players, with the first game between the Toros and the Little Cubs resulting in a close 11-9 final in favor of the Toros.

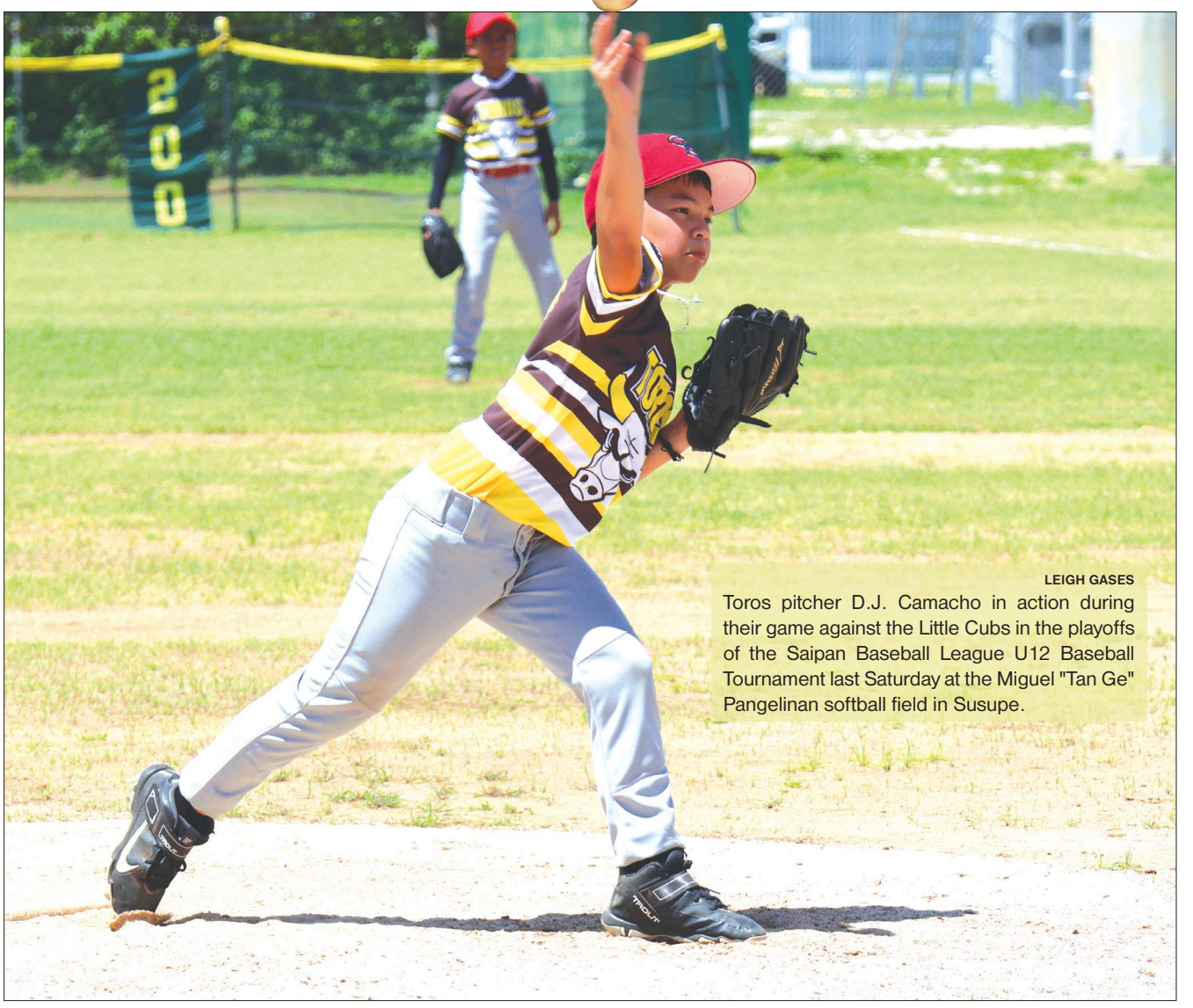
Both teams came out with a running start as the Toros drew first blood and scored seven runs in the first inning thanks to some Little Cubs fielding errors and consecutive base-on-balls by the pitcher.

Leighton Tenorio, Caleb Cabrera, Billy Flores, Kainoa Tenorio, Aiden Reyes, D.J. Camacho, and Sky Lizama all rounded the bases for the team's seven runs.

The Little Cubs weren't going to stand around and do nothing as in their at-bat, they scored four runs—Tatum Jones, Liam Palacios, Dan Camacho, and Liam Sablan in the first inning for a 4-7 game.

One run via Yuki Castro came in for the Toros in the second inning to extend their lead and the Little Cubs failed to

See TOROS on Page 19



LEIGH GASES
Toros pitcher D.J. Camacho in action during their game against the Little Cubs in the playoffs of the Saipan Baseball League U12 Baseball Tournament last Saturday at the Miguel "Tan Ge" Pangelinan softball field in Susupe.

Kamikaze's ace leads to victory in qualifier

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Instead of a spanking new car, Joe "Kamikaze" Camacho would have to settle for just winning the second qualifier to determine the makeup for the CNMI national golf team for the 2023 Pacific Games in Honiara, Solomon Islands.

The 62-year-old many time national golfer made an ace in hole No. 13 en route to shooting a 3-under par 69 last Saturday at the LaoLao Bay Golf & Resort.

Aside from the outstanding 1-swinger in the 13th hole, Camacho, with his trademark camouflage pants, also scored two birdies in the front nine—holes No. 5 and 7—and three more in the back nine—holes No. 11, 12, and 13—to finish with a 36 and 33 split.

J.J. Atalig, also a former national golfer, came in second after Camacho with a score of 77 (38-39), while Ned Norita and Peter Tenorio finished tied at third with an identical score of 80. Curiously, they also fired a 43-37 in the front and back nines.

Camacho

While the ace on the 13th hole can be considered lucky, Camacho said it was actually his second

See KAMIKAZE'S on Page 19

Dat's It wraps up Seaweed Vibes, 25-6

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

Dat's It wrapped up their game quickly against Seaweed Vibes, 25-6, in the 2023 Budweiser Belau Amateur Softball Association Slow Pitch Open League last Sunday at the DanDan Softball Field.

T.J. Cruz of Dat's It hit one out of the park in no time for a three-run shot at the top of the first inning, followed by another three-run home run by Kaipo Dikito for a 6-0 lead.

Seaweed Vibes didn't do much in their at-bat and in Dat's It's turn again, scored two more runs for a big 8-0 lead.

Ikluk Masayos, pitcher of Seaweed Vibes, was the all-around man for his team as he hit a go-ahead grand slam home run to finally get them on the board, 4-8, in the second inning.

It seemed like Seaweed Vibes were turning things around, but Dat's It had other plans and scored three more in the fourth inning. By this time, Seaweed Vibes had scored two more runs but were still down, 6-12.

When Seaweed Vibes turned cold in the fifth inning, that was it as Dat's It took advantage with two more runs in the fifth, plus a whopping 11 runs in the last inning. Des Abraham, Rick Jones, and Derek Abraham contributed to the runs with a home run each in that inning alone.

Aimeliik Bat Boys 16, Just 4 Fun 7

The Bat Boys of Aimeliik toppled the once mighty Just 4 Fun as they handed them their first loss, 16-7.

Just 4 Fun struck first with three runs in the first inning, but the Bat Boys overtook with a four-run inning with the help of Irvin Saralu's three-run home run.

Keith Kintol homered in the second for Just 4 Fun, but that was all the damage they could do in that inning. Just 4 Fun scored two more in the fourth, but was quickly silenced by Bat Boys pitcher Luis Iguel.

The Bat Boys then took advantage and scorched Just 4 Fun pitcher Nate Camacho with two runs in the third then six runs in the fourth for a 14-7 game.

Just 4 Fun could not make contact with the ball any further and the Bat Boys proceeded to add two more runs in the last inning for a final score of 16-7.

Blue Jays 12, No Choice 8

The Blue Jays finally recorded their second win as they defeated No Choice, 12-8.

See DAT'S on Page 19

LEIGH GASES
Dat's It's T.J. Cruz hits a three-run home run during their game against Seaweed Vibes in the 2023 Budweiser Belau Amateur Softball Association Slow Pitch Open League last Sunday at the DanDan Softball Field.